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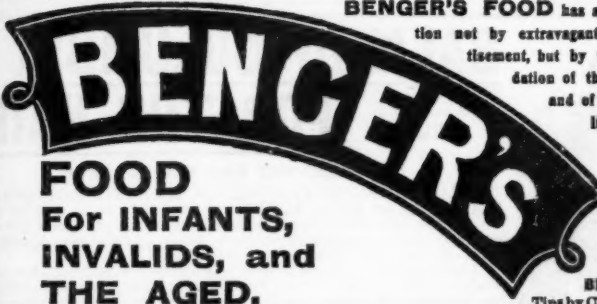
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER 1904.

The Tiger of Muscovy.

BY FRED WHISHAW.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Tsar Ivan maintained in his employ a band of men whom he named Oprichinniki, 'the Privileged,' whose coat of arms was a broom and whose duties were to sweep away his enemies. These men were usually employed upon the dirty work of his Grace; when there was a boyar to be removed or an offender's family to be destroyed, this band was appointed to the work, and unless the condemned were wealthy enough to pay for their escape and disappearance from the Cæsar's sight and memory they were soon ended. Thieves and rascals were these fellows, traitors to their employer, pitiless towards their victims, the very scum and outcasts of Moscow's population. Half-a-dozen of them were, it appears, sent on the morning following my escape in order to examine me in my cell anent the crime which I had committed—namely, the slaying of one of his Grace's hounds in despite of his Grace's own and special warning to do the brutes no injury.

Finding me flown and the Strelitz who should have guarded my locked door dead and robbed of his keys, the Oprichinniki returned to the Cæsar, full of their startling news.

Who would have thought—not I, indeed, for one—that the escape of so humble and insignificant a personage as myself should have so roused the rage of a great Cæsar? Yet I have been told that rarely had his Grace been seen in so tiger-like a mood as

when his 'sweepers,' as they were nicknamed, brought him the news—namely, that my prison was empty and I flown.

The unfortunate man who spoke for the rest was struck dead on the spot, the rest informed that until they should have discovered and punished with death the traitor who had brought about my flight their lives, every one of them, were in the balance.

Then the Tsar summoned his boyars, all who were in Moscow, to his great council-chamber and there harangued them. If, within twenty-four hours, the guilty persons were not discovered and brought before him to answer for the crime of conspiring to release a prisoner of the Tsar and in the Tsar's own house, each boyar should be fined in the sum of a thousand roubles, to be paid forthwith into the Cæsar's treasury. At this there fell a silence upon the assembly, for many of the boyars were poor enough and possessed not a quarter of the sum now demanded of them, and these knew well that if they paid not the fine with promptness, their goods would soon be forfeit, their serf-retainers taken from them, and themselves left in Heaven knows what plight at the mercy of his Grace's 'sweepers,' who would spare neither threat nor ill-usage to screw from their victims a little more for their own pouches.

Some boyar, more bold than the rest, cried out: 'Tsar, what have the boyars done? This is some treacherous hound of a Strelitz who has taken money from the prisoner, murdered his companion, and released the criminal.'

'Ay, ay! so it is!' one or two voices replied.

'He who accuses shall be himself accused,' cried Ivan. 'Take the boyar who spoke, Oprichinniki—it is Boris Vyazemsky—lead him to the knout-room; be sure that he tells all he knows.'

'I know nothing, Tsar,' protested Vyazemsky, but the sweepers had forced him from the chamber before he could say more than this.

A scornful laugh from the midst of a group of boyars suddenly startled all present. 'The Cæsar would enrich himself this day from our pockets, boyars,' said a voice aloud; 'but he shall be disappointed; not a kopek shall you pay, my brothers; if the Tsar is poor, poor he must remain.'

The Tsar's face became convulsed with rage, and his hand played with the dubina it held, as though longing to strike. His keen eyes peered and sought among the boyars; his tongue damped his lips more than once before they would speak.

'Stand forth, Krapatkin,' he cried hoarsely, finding his voice at last. 'I would to God the Siberian khans had cut thee in pieces. Must thou for ever come to my house to beard me before my boyars?'

'I speak only truth, Ivan Vassilitch; thou shalt not fill thy coffers this day; thou must lie down at night as poor as morning found thee!'

Krapatkin laughed again. The boyars round him shuddered, for there was not one that would have stood surety for the life of this rash fellow that the Tsar would suffer him to live for another instant.

Krapatkin stood forth boldly and gave no sign of timidity. The two fierce men faced one another, both standing, the Tsar on the step of his great chair, Krapatkin before him and rather beneath him.

There was silence, while all present waited to see the Cæsar's deadly staff rise and fall, but though his fingers moved nervously upon the shaft, the weapon remained unraised.

'Speak,' said Ivan; 'condemn thyself; I might have known it would be no other.'

'Yes, it was I that released the man,' said Krapatkin, eye to eye with the Tsar, watching and ready, yet showing no fear.

'Why? There must be reasons for everything, even for thy treachery and foolishness.'

'Is it treachery to save the Cæsar from a crime he would afterwards regret?' laughed Krapatkin. 'This man is a guest at thy Court, and the kinsman of a great foreign Queen.'

'Thou liest,' said Ivan; 'that is not thy reason. Speak quickly.'

'This man preserved my life—the life of one of the Tsar's most faithful servants,' continued Krapatkin, always with that mocking tone of his which might well aggravate a more peaceful man than Ivan. 'Has the Tsar no more gratitude for one who has done him so great a service than to imprison and torture him? Is my life, then, of so little value to thee, Tsar, that——'

The Tsar interrupted with a thud of his great staff upon the floor.

'Enough of ribaldry; come, thy reason for this act of disobedience and contempt? I think thou darest not speak truth, Krapatkin.'

'Will the Tsar have the truth?' the boyar laughed; 'then he

shall have it in full. This Englishman is kinsman to one who shall not be made to weep by Tsar or devil while Krapatkin breathes God's air.'

'You lie, she does not weep,' muttered the Tsar, his blazing eyes dilating with new fury; those who saw knew well that his self-control was at an end. 'Beware, Krapatkin!' someone whispered.

But Krapatkin was in his most reckless mood, and cared no more for the rage of Cæsar than he would have at such a moment for the very thunders of Jove.

'The tyranny of the Tsar may still draw tears where all his favours have drawn no love,' said the boyar, but almost before the words were free of his lips the heavy dubina had been raised and thrust.

Krapatkin was ready, and the blow, aimed at his chest, was eluded, only scratching his left shoulder but inflicting no wound. Quick as thought the great boyar had wrenched the weapon from the Cæsar's hands, and stood an instant as though in two moods whether he would return the blow to the Tsar's bosom.

Every boyar held his breath; I doubt not that many hoped, if they dared, that Krapatkin would strike, for, indeed, the Cæsar had many deadly enemies present, to all of whom he had given good cause for their enmity.

But Krapatkin did not strike.

In an instant his mind was made up. Silently he took the stout staff, broke it in two pieces with his great hands, staring eye to eye with the Tsar the while, and cast it aside.

'Beware, Tsar!' he muttered hoarsely, 'lest the day come when thou art so destroyed as I have now broken thy dubina. My blood is as red as thine.'

'Boyars,' cried the furious Tsar, 'would you see the Cæsar offended and threatened by this traitor? Stand ye idle, fools? Will none take the Cæsar's side?'

At this half-a-dozen boyars, anxious to win the present favour of the Tsar, sprang upon Krapatkin, and, after a struggle, overpowered him, six men to one. They led him away laughing and calling the Tsar by shameful names.

Then the Tsar gazed slowly round upon the boyars, and having summoned his Oprichinniki bade the fellows take the names of all present excepting those six who had fallen upon Krapatkin.

'These curs who dared not fight for their master,' he said, 'shall be made to yelp. Let each boyar pay ten score of roubles,

Oprichinniki, and if they find not the gold, ye shall obtain the value the best way ye can.'

Then the Tsar stalked from the audience-chamber, leaving a roomful of pale-faced boyars, who bargained and argued with the sweepers; cursed, wept, entreated, promised, threatened, and in the end paid, every man, his fine.

'Better this than as Krapatkin!' they told one another.

'He will feed the dogs in an hour!' said a pale boyar; 'but he broke the Cæsar's dubina and defied the devil to his face, and to have seen that sight I am ready to pay my fine—ay, and glad of it!'

'For what we have seen this day,' said another, 'I shall pray daily for Krapatkin's soul, though it cost me two fat candles a week at St. Cyril's ikon.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN first I came forth from prison, released by Krapatkin, who had—though I knew it not—now taken my place in the same cell, I was much put to it to determine where to hide myself; for if the Tsar should consider my poor self worthy the trouble of a search, he would certainly have me sought for, and the end would be worse than the beginning.

To Muirhead's quarters, wherein I had had hospitable accommodation, I could not of course return; this would be to imperil my friend as well as myself, and to make him but a poor return for his kindness.

I could, indeed, leave Moscow altogether for a while, and hide myself in some village within a league or two of the city, or even in the forest if matters came to the worst, though that would be a most undesirable matter indeed, for it was now winter, which in Muscovy is a period of great cold and severity.

In the end I decided that I would go to my old friend Kiril, my lieutenant in the custodianship of the wolf-dogs, and to him appeal for sanctuary during the days of my trouble. Both he and his assistant Stepan were, if I was not too easily persuaded to my own advantage, inclined to like me well, whether for the reason that I seemed to understand the nature of the dogs and to be loved by the brutes, or for some other, I know not.

So to Kiril I repaired, informing him that I had incurred the

anger of the Tsar for no better reason than that I had accidentally slain the hound Boorya who had savagely attacked me during the episode of Krapatkin's foolish display of bravado.

'Boorya was the most devilish of all our beasts,' said Kiril. 'I have many scars from his teeth, even I. Our father the Tsar should be told we are well rid of this dog, then maybe he will forgive thee.'

'I have no doubt this will be told to his Grace on my behalf, and that his anger will not last long; meanwhile I am in danger, Kiril, and know not where to lay my head; give me shelter—thou shalt be well paid for it.'

'A whole skin is dearer than money,' said Kiril, scratching his shaggy head, which was like a bear's coat. 'Will the Oprichinniki come to seek thee?'

'I cannot tell,' said I. 'But even if so they should not find me, for in case of extreme need I should go into the very kennel of the dogs, where, be sure, no Oprichinnik shall thrust his nose to seek me.'

'Good! lie within their shed, if thou wilt; or, stay, there is the *lyédnik*, the ice-cellar, wherein is stored our food and the dogs'—it is no fit chamber for a courtier like thyself to sleep in, indeed, but at a pinch——'

'Good! make me a bed of sacks behind the ice-blocks in the pit of the cellar,' said I; 'it would be a clever Oprichinnik who found me lying snugly there like a maggot in an apple. Come, we will see to it at once. If I should be found, thou shalt know nothing of my hiding. I am there unknown to thee and to Stepan.'

Both of my friends grinned at this and scratched their heads, after the fashion of the Muscovish moujik or commoner. Stepan bade me not forget that so great a service as the deceiving of the Tsar's men was surely worth a present in money, and that it would perhaps be safer, all things duly considered, if payment were made beforehand, lest accident should happen to either or both parties. I therefore paid each man the value of some two shillings, which for them was wealth indeed and the occasion of much gratitude and rejoicing.

During the day came notice from the palace that the dogs should be kept hungry. The meaning of such an order was well known to my friends and to me, and when they brought me food at noon they informed me of the message received.

'God have mercy upon his soul!' said Kiril, 'whoever it be;

for it is a fearful death to die, and it is to be hoped amends will be made in a better world.'

'Amen!' said Stepan, crossing himself. 'At least we are safe from such a fate as this, we three.'

'Nay, I think it is we whose souls need praying for,' I rejoined, 'for assuredly the evil one will take a new grip upon each for every fellow-creature we send to his death in this manner; it is the worst wickedness to condemn a man to such an end. Let the Tsar see to his soul for this greater part of the crime; but our share is devilish enough if we carry out the orders of the Tsar.' Both men crossed themselves.

'Are we, who are helpless instruments,' said Kiril, 'to be held responsible for the *ukases* of the Tsar?'

'Ay, if we make no effort to stand between him and the devil by hindering his most hellish decrees.'

'Who are we, so to stand? Doubtless there is wisdom hidden in thy words, *Barin*, but to us they appear only foolishness.'

'There might be opportunities to save a man. When he is brought and left for you to cast among the dogs, why should you not soil the sand with blood, leaving a few scattered rags of clothing, if you will, as evidence of his end, but let the man himself go free? There are many who would gladly pay half their substance to escape naked into the forest rather than come to such an end.'

The double argument of danger to the soul and profit to the pocket prevailed, I think, with these good fellows, and I trust may have since brought forth fruit in the saving of a life or two, though of this I cannot be sure, for I was soon to take my leave of both dogs and keepers, as shall presently be seen, and have never again set eyes upon either the one or the other.

'At any rate,' I now said, 'go one of you to the kitchen of the palace and learn the news; let us know who is this latest victim of the Tsar's rage, destined, if we permit it, to be torn by the dogs to-night.' Truth to tell, I had my suspicions as to this.

Kiril went to the palace and made some inquiries among the serving-people, bringing back a garbled version—which did not lack in luridness by passing through many lips—of the quarrel between the Tsar and Krapatkin.

'It is thought that no less a boyar than Prince Krapatkin himself should be the victim,' added Kiril, 'though at the palace kitchens they know nothing of the order sent to us.'

'It is a deed the Tsar would scarcely dare to blazon abroad

beforehand,' said I. 'This boyar is only a little less than the Tsar himself.'

'Nay, have you not heard of the Regent Shuisky and his fate, thirty-odd years ago?' said Kiril. 'The Cæsar was then but a youth of some fifteen years, yet he suddenly rose in his wrath and condemned this great boyar—greater, in a manner, than himself—to instant death by the dogs.'

'It may be that the Tsar is wiser now,' said I, 'being older; moreover, he has now many enemies. He is wise, be sure, to see to it that so devilish a crime as this he intends for to-night should not be spoken of beforehand. But thou hast discovered his intention, Kiril, good man; let us see whether there is not a way to save our souls a devil-grip. Krapatkin is rich, moreover—rich as a Tsar!'

'St. Vladimir, equal to the Holy Apostles, have mercy upon us! How should we do that?' exclaimed Kiril, and Stepan scratched his head and crossed himself after his manner.

'How many men will bring the victim?' I asked; and Stepan replied that he had taken part in six such executions during his twelve or more years of service in the present office, and there had never been more than two men—armed soldiers, however.

'Their arms matter nothing,' I replied; 'for there shall be no force used. Buy drink for the fellows beforehand, and invite them to drink in your hut in order to gain nerve for the devil's work to be done. While they drink the victim must be placed somewhere: let him lie here, in the *lyédnik*—the rest is easy; I will see that the dogs go hungry and that you are well paid. If there is blame, it will fall upon the soldiers, but be sure they will not stay in Moscow to meet the trouble half-way!'

'By St. Vladimir,' murmured Kiril, 'the equal of the Apostles, it is a good scheme; but a whole skin is better than——'

'There is your soul to think of as well as your skin,' said I; 'be sure the evil one has a special furnace for those that have no pity for their fellow-men! Such shall scorch and writhe a thousand times for each cruelty done here below.'

Kiril spat on the ground. 'Noo,' he said, '*ladno*, I agree!' and, Stepan concurring, the matter stood arranged.

It was a dark night when, as I lay shivering upon my sacks behind the ice-blocks in Kiril's cellar, I heard the tramp of feet and the scrape of a sledge upon hard snow; they were bringing their victim to his execution upon a hand-sledge. Now, would Kiril's offer of strong drink prevail? Would the fellows be

tempted to delay for half an hour their hateful work? If not, I must be ready for other action, for in any case the dogs should not feast to-night—ay, even though their starved howls already so rent the air that it was difficult to make sure by hearing of what passed.

Nevertheless I heard the sledge arrive and stop, and the voices of Kiril and others began to reach my straining ears.

The dogs heard them also, and where a pair of hungry beasts had howled, the full eleven now joined in the piteous chorus, and drowned, for me, all other sound.

But presently steps approached the cellar; there was the squeak of the sledge-runners. Thanks be to God! then my scheme had worked—they were bringing their victim.

‘Lift him in here, sledge and all,’ said Kiril’s voice; ‘the poor devil will be warmer here than outside. He is a boyar, by his dress, and soft.’

‘A boyar! yes, and a boyar of the boyars,’ said another voice, ‘curse him! They say he is next to the Tsar, therefore I hate him next to the Tsar; all that are rich and powerful I abhor in proportion to their power and their riches!’

‘Better a live dog than a dead lion,’ said Kiril, ‘and this poor devil has but half an hour to live.’

‘Ten minutes at most,’ said the other, pushing the hand-sledge into the cellar so violently that it turned over, and the wretched gagged victim bound to it now lay beneath, his face upon the wooden boards.

‘Leave him so—it is useless to trouble oneself needlessly,’ said the rascal who owned the strange voice. ‘If the meat is bruised the dogs will not notice!’

Both men withdrew laughing, and out came I forthwith from my sanctuary, for to waste time were foolishness, even though the ten minutes should grow into an hour.

I had provided myself with the wherewithal to cut the bonds of the victim, but until I had turned the sledge over and, fumbling clumsily in the darkness, at last removed the gag, I knew not for certain that I had to deal with Krapatkin.

But no sooner was the voice of that sturdy boyar released from its bondage than he employed it so lustily in cursing the Tsar and his present plight that I was left not another moment in doubt as to his identity.

It seemed that he must first relieve his mind by this exercise before inquiring as to who should be his present benefactor. As

for me, I let him curse on, while I cut the bonds which secured him to the sledge—no light task, for they had bound the man as though they had to deal with the strength of an ox.

‘It is thou, Shadwell, doubtless?’ he said at last.

‘None other,’ I replied laughing. ‘Curse on, if it doth thy soul good!’

‘I guessed it; I had great hopes of thee!’ said Krapatkin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

‘It is true,’ Krapatkin repeated, ‘for, thought I, Shadwell is at large and will have heard of my plight; maybe he will desire to return tit for tat and release me as I released him; well, I am grateful!’

‘It is a good thing I had a knife,’ I laughed, ‘for they have bound thee as though thou wert possessed of a bull’s strength!’

‘As for that I am no lambkin,’ he replied. ‘There are four at least of them that limp since the binding began; one, I think, has limped into the next world; we had a good fight. Tell me quickly, before these fellows return, are the dog-keepers on our side? Nay, they must surely be so or I should have been cast into the pit immediately without the drinking interval, which, I guess, is thy scheme?’

‘They are our men, both; I have promised them both, on thy behalf, a good gratuity.’

‘Lord, they shall be welcome to it; I shall have then but two to settle with.’

‘What, must thou fight again?’ I laughed. ‘Go, rather, in peace, before the men return.’

‘Nay, my friend, why, how meanly thou must think of me! To leave two such rascals at large in this over-villained world when they may easily be despatched to another! I deal not so meanly by my fellow-men. Get thee back to the ice-blocks in case either fellow, having seen thee, should afterwards escape; I will wager my head to a silver coin that he will not, but it is useless to run risks which go toward no good end.

‘Stay,’ Krapatkin added; ‘I will lie down, and place thou the sledge over me as it lay when the fellow threw it down with me. I have a mind to startle my friend before he dies.’

I agreed to do as Krapatkin desired, the more gladly because I was never one to love the needless shedding of blood, and I cherished a secret hope that while my grim boyar struggled to

his feet from under the hand-sledge his victims might escape into the darkness and go free; for, after all, these men were but instruments of a higher will, brutal agents of a more brutal power. By the time Krapatkin lay once more beneath his overturned sledge I heard the footsteps and the raised voices of the men; a glint of lantern light fell upon the snow without, and the dogs within their kennel lifted up their voices in a chorus of hungry, piteous baying.

Hurriedly I lowered myself into my icy hiding-place, and that none too soon, for I was scarcely in when the men kicked the door of the cellar open and entered. I heard Kiril utter an exclamation; of course he had not expected to see the boyar still lying as he had been left. He afterwards explained to me that he supposed I must have fallen asleep before the victim was brought, and had thus allowed my own plot to fall to the ground.

'What ails thee, man?' asked one of the soldiers; his voice betrayed that he had dealt freely with Kiril's spirit-flask. 'Art thou sorry for this fellow's fate? Why, look you, think of it thus: he is a boyar, second to the Tsar; both are devils and oppressors of honest men.'

Kiril laughed very loud, doubtless to awaken me from my sleep, good man!

'Shall we unbind him?' he said, 'if he is the devil-man you say, it will be grand to see him fight with the dogs!'

'Unbind him? You speak like a fool, my friend! Let this fellow have but a little finger free and he will contrive to throttle you with it. He is, as I say, like a wild beast for strength and ferocity. We will throw him in, sledge and all. You should have seen him struggle when we bound him, twelve of us and all on the top of him, mark you, and yet we barely had our will of him; now, you devil-man,' he continued, 'your time has come.' He thrust his toe under the sledge and gripped the rim in his hands. 'Help to turn him over, brothers—he's as heavy as a bull!'

Then I heard a great scuffle, the opening of a door, the quick rush of feet upon the snow without, groans, exclamations, the thud of falling bodies, and all to the accompaniment of such an uproar from the dogs as though they were aware that even now they were being cheated of a hideous feast. A minute later came Krapatkin's voice:

'Come forth, my friend,' he said aloud; 'the fight is over, and well over.'

I heard afterwards from Kiril, who stayed to see it while Stepan fled in ungovernable terror, that when Krapatkin rose suddenly from the tangle of cut cords that lay about him and over the sledge, the soldiers dropped back as though they had been struck by the falling sickness. Krapatkin threw himself instantly upon him who was nearer the door, and having taken the rascal's sword plunged it into the body of the wretched man, and withdrawing the weapon thrust it heart deep into the carcase of the second fellow, who knelt and gasped by the overturned sledge. Kiril's foot was at the very door in case the boyar should, being blood-hot, forget that here was a friend and not a third enemy; but Krapatkin after a glance at him threw his sword upon the ground and hailed me, as afore mentioned. The place reeked of blood like a charnel-house as I came up from my sanctuary, and Kiril was already dragging the bodies forth.

'It was a good play,' said Krapatkin; 'thou shouldst have seen the faces of the fellows, Shadwell, when the fiend arose, clad in my poor body, to confront them. Assuredly they thought it was the devil himself, for they said so, first one and then the other.'

'Bah!' I said, 'let us go forth into the air—I stifle here.'

'Let the dogs have this trash, friend,' said Krapatkin; 'hark how they cry for food.'

'Not so, Kiril,' I cried angrily; 'see that a priest buries them'; and the boyar, after a fierce glance at me, for at all times he bore ill to be crossed, added 'Well, have thy will!'

Then we two retired to Kiril's hut, for Krapatkin would drink and eat before we went, for he had well nigh starved all day. Here we found in plenty black bread and the white Muscovish spirit distilled from grain, and as he ate and drank he conversed with me, showing but little of the grace and softness of gratitude for the boon of freedom which surely I had conferred upon him, but rather the jealousy of the rival lover; for it appeared that his thoughts even now dwelt upon his desire to secure my kinswoman for his bride and to carry her quickly away from Moscow to his country seat.

'Moscow is not safe to-day,' said he; 'I have never before seen the Tsar so given over to his passions, though, Heaven knows, I have confronted him in all moods. My escape now will set the finishing touch to his madness. You shall see that it will be so. There will be a hundred new names to add to his list of victims,

for whose souls—having destroyed their bodies—he will pray in the churches. I will see that this Amy Romalyn's is not one of them.'

'See thine own is not included in the list,' said I. 'I think he will not touch Amy, but he will pursue thee as the devil strives for the soul of a man.'

'He shall not touch Amy because I shall remove her into safety,' said the boyar; and at these words I flashed out.

'See now, Krapatkin,' cried I. 'Doubtless thou hast thought me up to this time a mild man, and in truth I am not by nature a quarrelsome one. Yet if thou do aught with Amy, against her will, using either violence or any treatment such as were unbecoming to her honour and innocence, I will follow thee until I have found thee, even to the ends of the earth, and having found thee I will teach thee that in me at least there exists one who is able to call even a Krapatkin to account.'

'It may very well be,' replied the boyar, retaining his coolness, 'that we shall yet come to loggerheads over this wench. I am not to be frightened by threats, my friend. Doubtless there would be a fine fight, for though thou hast reach I have the strength of an ox and am no novice with the rapier. The rest may be left. She is not, I think, averse to me. There will be no occasion for such matters as you fear—violence and so forth. I will persuade her to leave Moscow, if persuaded she will be, which I dare to expect.'

'And if she refuse?'

'If she refuse, we both remain in Moscow, to be hunted by the Tsar. It would not be easy to remove a woman from the terem by force; moreover, I have never found persuasion fail.'

'Well,' said I, 'go thy own way, boyar, but remember that I shall hold thee to account. In the end, thou shalt find I am to be reckoned with.'

'With all my heart, so it shall be, though, be sure, the thought of thee shall not in any case deter me by an inch from my desires, if they happen to fall foul of thine own. Is thy say said? If so, I will depart.'

Later in the day, as I afterwards learned, this bold boyar actually visited the Tsar's palace and, the Tsar refusing to see him, as was indeed to be expected, sent him an insolent message. Thence he went to the terem in order to persuade Amy, if he could, to escape with him to his estate at Slatky Ozer, twenty

leagues distant from Moscow. This suggestion Amy, to his displeasure, refused—not without anger, I would wager—neither could he induce her by any word or promise to listen to his offers of protection.

And from the terem the unfortunate man went straight to his sudden doom; for in the great arched gateway of the Kremlin, as he passed through it, he was ambushed, by the Tsar's orders, by a dozen of the Oprichinniki and run through the body before he knew that he was attacked. So died one who was worthy of a better fate than to have lived in such a land and under such a Tsar; a great boyar and a brave man—the bravest of men, indeed, and the most reckless, and who, but for the excessive independence and boldness of his nature, might have lived to be a Cæsar. For a dozen years later a less worthy boyar than he—Boris Godunof—stepped into the place vacated by the last scion of the effete dynasty of Rurik, which then ended in the person of Ivan's unmanly son Feodor and the child Dmitry.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE news of Krapatkin's death reached the terem early on the following day. It came as a shock to Amy, who shed secret tears for this boyar, whom she had liked and admired chiefly for his fearless bearing towards the fierce Tsar, his master, though of love for him she had none. As for the rest of the women, her companions, they took but small interest in the tragedy since it did not affect themselves, none of them being among the admired of the great boyar.

Maria Nagoy affected much pity for her rival. 'Amy Romalyn is unlucky in her lovers,' she said; 'there is the long one, who is under a cloud and likely to follow Krapatkin into deeper gloom; then this great dead boyar himself; and lastly the Tsar, who, I think, will have none of her.'

'That is yet to be seen,' said Olga Shishkin; 'shall I tell thee what I think of this matter, Maria?'

'Oh, if thou wilt, speak; let those listen who are not weary of thy opinions,' replied Maria yawning.

'Well, then, I say there is rather evidence, in the death of this boyar, of the Tsar's jealousy for Amy. He will have no rivals. Shadwell has disappeared—dead, maybe, though I hope not;

Krapatkin is killed. I will say one other thing: I think that Amy has but to play the tune for his Grace to dance.'

'And I think you are a fool, Olga,' said Maria angrily.

Presently, when a messenger came from the Tsar summoning Amy to his presence, Olga glanced at Maria and saw her flush red with vexation. But lo! the messenger returned, pale and anxious for his own well-being, for instead of Amy herself he carried back news that she refused to go.

The women of the terem crossed themselves and called their saints to witness that terrible things were in store.

'What said I, Olga?' whispered Maria Nagoy, frightened yet exulting; 'this is the beginning of the end. To disobey Cæsar! The Saints preserve us all!'

Very quickly came a posse of Oprichinniki, who formed up while their leader went in search of Amy, who—seeing that force was to be employed—went readily with her escort, for indeed she could do nothing else.

'There is the end of the Anglichanka!' said Maria. 'I do not love her, but God grant the Tsar withhold his dubina from her.'

'It is not the end, Maria,' said Olga; 'thou art a babe in the art of winning a man. Amy knows what she knows. Has the Tsar loved her less hitherto for her independence?'

'This is rank disobedience,' said Maria; 'we shall see whether he will now love her or slay her.'

When Amy reached the audience-chamber she found a sullen Tsar seated amid a pale and anxious Court. There was silence among the groups of boyars, and his Grace sat with his face upon his hand, his elbow resting upon his knee.

'Why camest thou not at my summons, wench?' he said. 'Does thy conscience accuse thee of receiving this Krapatkin in the terem? Thy fault is known to me.'

'At least my hands are not red with his blood,' said Amy. 'I came not because I was afraid, Tsar; I cannot look upon thee; I fear thee.'

'Nay, that is foolishness. May not I, who am Cæsar, punish the contumacious boyars who are my subjects? Fear nothing, Amy; for my enemies, I am a tiger whose fangs they shall not escape; for thee I am a lamb, as thou shalt see. I have sent for thee with purpose the most benevolent. Let the room be cleared. Stay thou, Godunof, and thou, my son. You shall be witnesses that I approach this maiden in kindness and honour.'

The Court, visibly relieved, for they had expected an outbreak of terrible anger, gladly dispersed, crossing themselves in gratitude when safely without that matters had gone more peacefully than they had hoped.

'I have sent for thee this day,' continued the Tsar, the chamber being now cleared of all save Godunof and the prince, his son, 'to bid thee prepare thyself for much honour, and I doubt not for all happiness. Thou shalt be Tsaritsa. All night I have considered and prayed; and this is my decision, which is in full accord with my own desires, for on the whole thou hast pleased me well, and that in spite of a prejudice formed against thee for no fault of thine own, but rather of the Queen thy mistress. What say'st thou?'

'I will prepare myself,' said Amy faintly. Glancing at the face of the young prince she saw that he had suddenly grown white and haggard, and that he held to the arm of his chair as though he would fall over sideways. Fortunately he made no sound, and the Tsar, otherwise occupied, noticed nothing.

'So be it,' he said, evidently relieved and pleased by Amy's ready acquiescence, which, it may be, he had not expected. 'So be it, chosen one of my heart. In two weeks thou shalt sit beside me as my Tsaritsa; meanwhile leave not the terem, I pray you, for it is unseemly that the chosen of the Caesar should be seen abroad.'

Amy bowed and made as though she would depart.

'Stay, there is no need for haste; we will play together a while—the chessboard is ready.'

'Tsar, I am in no mood to play to-day; suffer me to depart; there is much to prepare.'

'Well, go—stay, dost thou mourn for Krapatkin? Or is it for thy long kinsman's disappearance? I have some suspicion, minx, that thou knowest of his hiding-place. Come, where is this Shadwell?'

'I know not, Tsar. If I did, would the Tsar love me better for delivering his enemies into his hands?'

'The Tsar must have obedience. Mercy is his prerogative, to be exercised by him or not, as he pleases. Thou knowest not my mind; it may be set upon mercy for this man, in spite of his offences. Come, where is thy kinsman?'

'I have said that I know not.' Amy blessed the memory of poor murdered Krapatkin, who at his visit to the terem had most discreetly refused to give her any information as to my

hiding-place. 'The Tsar will demand it of thee, and then what? he had said.

'Beware how thou liest to me,' said Ivan, 'Tsaritsa-elect though thou be!'

'Is it not enough that I have said I know not? Would the Tsar wed one who hath no truth?'

'There have been Tsaritsas who have deceived me; who have forfeited the love I gave them. Well, it may be thou tellest the truth; only remember this: that if thou tellest no secret I promise no mercy when he is found. Thy telling to-day might buy mercy for him to-morrow.'

'Mercy for the slaying of a dog and thereby postponing for a week the vengeance of Cæsar! Surely there could be no mercy for one so guilty!'

'There is more in this, minx, than the death of a dog. Canst thou never bridle that bold tongue of thine? Well, let it wag then, I love to hear it—see how I bear with thee! Come, sit down—we will play together; nay, go not—I desire it of thee.'

Amy, seeing how the land lay, and that the Tsar was in a placable mood, played out a game of chess with him, which game he won. Godunof and the prince withdrew meanwhile.

'Now return, if thou wilt, to the terem,' he said. 'Stay.' The Tsar took from his own finger a ring set with a great emerald; this he placed upon hers as her hand lay upon the chess-table. 'I had never a bride save the first that I loved like thee, Amy,' he said; 'thou hast conquered me indeed.'

He kissed her hand with the great green ring upon it, then her forehead, Amy submitting quietly. 'Two weeks,' he continued, 'for preparation; more is not needed; I would rather it were less. Go, prepare thyself, *goloobooshka ty moye!*'

Amy stalked through the terem head in air, her heart in a strange whirl of mixed emotions—triumph, self-condemnation, and doubtless a dozen others fought there for first place. The women sat in groups in their living-room, sewing, chatting, playing upon the *balaleika*. All paused for a moment in their occupations as Amy entered, for they would read in her face how she had prospered after so unheard-of a matter as the refusal to obey the summons of Cæsar; the probabilities one way and another had afforded subject for much conversation during her absence.

Maria Nagoy looked in Amy's face and read there her own defeat.

'Witch!' she hissed as Amy passed her, 'what hast thou

done to enslave the Tsar's will that he slew thee not for disobedience ?'

'See the ring !' suddenly cried Olga Shishkin. 'Oh, see the ring upon her finger !'

'Ay, dost thou see it, Maria ?' said Amy. 'Behold ! it is the gift of the Tsar—the gift of the Tsar to his bride-elect !'

'Sorceress !' cried Maria. 'Sisters, this is a witch—the Tsar should be told—his life is not safe from her ; she——'

Poor Maria Nagoy's words failed her, she threw up her arms, her head swayed and twisted towards her shoulder, and she fell forward in a fit.

Olga Shishkin followed Amy from the room in obedience to a sign from the Anglichanka.

'Olga,' said Amy, 'it is true that he has chosen me, and with his own hand, red with Krapatkin's blood, has placed this ring upon my finger. This is the end—we meet no more, thou and I, after this night. Take the ring : it burns me like the fires of the nether pit. When three days are past give it to Maria Nagoy. Tell her that I, who might, neither desire nor dare to be Tsaritsa.'

'But, Amy, consider,' said Olga aghast ; 'to sit upon Cæsar's throne——'

'Nay, I have well considered. I cannot and dare not ; let Maria sit by his side, if she dare.'

'Then why, Amy, in the saints' names, have you won the Tsar's favour only to reject it in the end ?'

'Nay, God knows why ; I know not. My own heart I know not.'

'As for the ring, keep it for Heaven's sake,' said Olga ; 'for she who took it from thee as thou desirest, and gave it to Maria, were lost indeed. The Tsar would send for me, ask me this and that, and I should be stripped and knouted for doing thy behests.'

Amy considered. 'It is true,' she said. 'Well, I will keep the ring ; tell Maria she should have had it. Now farewell !'

'But how—why—whither goest thou—the Tsar's arm is so long, Amy, it will reach thee at the uttermost ends of the earth.'

'Maybe,' said Amy ; 'if so, I cannot help it ; there are others in danger besides myself ; I cannot stay longer. It would have been wiser to go with Sir Jerome as I was advised, but my heart was set upon triumphing over the Tsar, who at my first coming made of me a laughing-stock for the Court.'

'And what wilt thou do? where hide, that the eyes of the tiger shall not find thee and his nostrils scent thee out?'

'Moscow is wide; I will find sanctuary for the present, and when opportunity offers I shall depart.'

'That is when the next envoy comes. Well, I would not be in thy place, Amy; or, rather, I would, but I should act differently. Dear Heaven! To have the chance of a place by Cæsar's side, and to prefer to hide like a mouse from the cat's claws.'

Amy stood dressed in her fur shooba, ready to go out into the frost.

'Good-bye, dear Olga; I have loved thee alone of all these women,' she said.

'Alas! Amy, do not go to thy death,' sobbed Olga, clinging to her. Amy kissed the girl. 'I must go, Olga; there is no other way,' she said. 'Farewell!—God keep thee!'

CHAPTER XXIX.

FROM the terem Amy crept in the falling dusk straight towards the place where Kiril and Stepan lived in their filthy hut, close to the noisy abode of the wolf-dogs, their charges. Within the hut Stepan lay and snored on the platform atop of his great stove; Kiril sat and prepared food at the stove mouth.

Amy entered the hut, to the immense wonderment of its owner, who gazed at her with shaded eyes, as though she had brought the sun in with her. He gazed suspiciously at her, though with admiration.

'You are Kiril,' said Amy; 'I know you. Where is the Englishman—the custodian? I am his friend, and would speak with him instantly.'

But Kiril shook his head, for the Muscovish peasant is a sealed book when it suits him to be ignorant, and until his obstinacy has been surmounted by threat or kindness.

Kiril, it appeared, had not seen me for many days. I had disappeared.

'My father, thou art cautious,' Amy smiled; 'that is the part of a wise man only until he has learned that caution is unnecessary. Thou hast been a good friend to the Englishman. I have heard—what the Tsar shall never hear, nor any other than I—of thy kindness but yesterday, when Krapatkin was saved by thee and the Englishman.'

Kiril was on his knees and prostrate upon his face in a moment.

'My life is at thy mercy, Soodarina,' he cried. 'I have seen thee sitting beside the Tsar; I am lost!'

'Not so; this Englishman is more than the Tsar to me, for I am an Anglichanka. It is a matter of his life and of my own, not of thine. Summon him quickly if he is in hiding here; I guess, though I know not, that he may be in thy *lyédnik*.'

Kiril crossed himself and departed.

'Soodar,' he cried to me, as I lay in a compartment of the dog-kennel which good Kiril had himself partitioned for me from the space occupied by the hounds; for this was warmer than the cellar, and indeed there could scarcely be a safer sanctuary—for who would dare to look within it for a hidden man unless he would be torn to pieces by the brutes whose shed I had invaded? 'Soodar,' said Kiril, 'a woman would see thee—an Anglichanka; nevertheless if there is danger I will say that——'

In a moment I was out and by Amy's side in Kiril's hut.

'Herbert,' she said, 'God has given us our lives up to this moment, and has spared us through many dangers which my foolishness brought upon us, but now I am afraid.' Amy sat down upon the narrow wooden bench that ran round three sides of the hut. The girl's body shook and her face paled—she seemed about to swoon. It was the reaction of too much fearlessness, a strain too long borne.

I brought her a small measure of strong spirit and forced a little of it between her lips; she revived presently.

'Krapatkin's death—your danger and my own,' she began. 'I know not with certainty what has overcome me, but my courage is for the moment gone.'

'Art thou in particular and imminent danger?' I said. 'Tell me quickly, Amy.'

Amy showed me her hand with the great green ring set upon her middle finger.

'What is it—what means it?' I said. 'Has the Tsar——'

She inclined her head. 'It is his gift; but an hour ago he bade me go prepare myself, for I should be Tsaritsa in two weeks. Oh, Herbert, I dare not return to the terem—what shall I do?—where shall I go?'

'The hour of our danger is come indeed, Amy,' said I. 'Let us consider. Return thou canst not, or if returning it must be but for a day while we may make some arrangement.'

'No, no; I will not return to the terem, not for a day nor even for a night. I dare not, Herbert; I have lost heart—I am a coward!'

'Thou a coward!' I laughed, 'the word and thy name are as the poles! Couldst thou not be satisfied with a partial triumph, Amy? The Tsar has loved none but thee these many weeks; must thou needs wait for the consummation of deadly danger, as now?'

'Chide me not,' she entreated—she who would, up to this time, have withered me with scorn if I had presumed to question her will, as now. 'Chide me not, Herbert, for I have no heart but to be comforted this day—encourage me, rather; tell me how we may escape from Moscow—oh, my God! shall we two ever see dear England again?'

'Nay, God willing, we shall return home in safety. Will you leave Moscow this very night if so it can be arranged? Why should we not go home forthwith—it is dark now—hire a three-horsed sledge, and make with all speed and along by-ways toward Poland, and so through Germany homeward? We shall have a night's start of our pursuers; God will help us and this long sword of mine. Come, Amy, let us keep a stout heart and show these Muscovites our heels until they prefer to feel the kiss of my blade!'

All this I said to give heart to Amy, though for myself I had not much hope in the successful issue of such a flight as I proposed.

'Why, as to three-horsed sledges, thy words remind me,' she now said, flushing as she remembered. 'Krapatkin would have had me escape with him last night. "I have commanded that my horses be waiting at the Northern Gate," said he, "both this evening at nine and—in case thou canst not leave the terem to-day—to-morrow also"; this, mark you, Herbert, after I had refused to escape with him; "for," said he, "thou mayest yet change thy mind, or the Tsar's madness may frighten thee, therefore forget not that my horses shall be ready for thee at the gate every night for a week, and shall be at thy orders whether I meet thee there or no, for who can tell what might befall me meanwhile?" Half an hour later he died—murdered; but doubtless his horses will await me daily.'

'Why, then, so be it!' said I; 'and here is a good omen indeed for our escape! Darest thou, Amy,' I continued, 'await me here awhile alone with Kiril? He is very faithful. I would

see Muirhead; it is right that he should know that we leave Moscow.'

'Oh, Herbert, I am afraid!' Amy exclaimed, clinging to my arm; but a moment later, ashamed of her fears and quickly overcoming them, she bade me go. So through the darkness I crept like a thief in the night, and reached Muirhead's house in safety. To him I told all that had passed, excepting the direction of our flight, which I purposely withheld from him, for knowledge might prove to him a dangerous thing if it should occur to the Tsar to question our good friend.

Muirhead agreed that, in the circumstances, and since Amy was firmly determined to reject the honour offered her, she must fly.

'Thou art already a marked man,' he said, 'for the Cæsar relentlessly pursues those who once escape him until he has had his will of them—as witness Krapatkin; therefore thou must in any case have departed or died. Frankly, I have little hope of your escape and Amy's, my friend; it grieves me to say it, but it is better to be prepared.'

'My friend,' I laughed, 'the odds are certainly against us, but we play for a high stake, which is freedom, and be sure I shall play my best.'

'What a foolish maid is here!' said Muirhead. 'And what an incomprehensible matter is the mind of a woman!'

'Has she not insisted from first to last,' said I, unwilling to hear Amy accused, 'that she would first tame this tiger and then flee him? She is consistency itself!'

'What a foolish consistency—a consistency that should be spelt vanity, to my thinking. Well, I grieve for thee, Shadwell; the odds are gravely against thee. Would to God I could think that not only thou shouldst win thy stake, freedom, but also as great a one, I fancy, in thine eyes—her heart. I doubt not if thou gain the one, the other shall also be thine!'

'Of that I have no hope,' I said; 'in any case it is not a matter for discussion, Muirhead.'

My good friend then gave me presents: a better shooba, or fur coat, than my own, a small pistol with powder and bullets, and other articles convenient for the journey. After which we parted, he promising to advise my mother and Amy's in case we should disappear, and no more be heard of us. For indeed he made little secret of his opinion that we took our first step this night into eternity.

Standing in the porch without, and apparently waiting for me, was a muffled figure, and, concluding that I had been followed and was threatened, I quickly drew my sword and stood upon guard.

'Put up thy sword,' said the man. 'I am a friend—I am the Cæsarevitch. I know thee by thy length; thou art Shadwell; is it not so?' I assented, astonished enough.

'I came to Muirhead for news of thy kinswoman Amy. I went to the terem to give her certain warning and counsel, but she is not there.' The prince was agitated and spoke in gasps.

'Is she not in the terem?' I exclaimed, feigning surprise. 'Doubtless she has gone to take the air, or is in the church at her prayers; she will return presently.'

'If thou shouldst see her,' said the prince, intensely agitated, 'bid her for the love of God return to the terem no more. My father has chosen her for his wife; will she offer herself a living sacrifice? The Tsar is mad.'

'Fie, prince,' said I; 'he is thy father.'

'Nay, I blame him not; it is God's will that he is mad, not his own fault; only, I say, do not let Amy sacrifice herself. If she is ambitious and would be Tsaritsa, bid her wait a little—the Tsar's heart fails. I shall one day be Cæsar in his place, and then—if only she escape now—my God! Shadwell, the Tsar's love means death. Let her wait: I will give her life, happiness, honour—a better love than my father's, for God would bless our union; this marriage would be an abomination in His sight.'

'All this I will tell her,' said I.

'Stay, take this purse—it is all I have. What is there will assist her escape. She is afraid of the Tsar—oh, I am sure of it; tell her if she knew all, her fear would be ten times tenfold. I pray to God that you persuade her to escape while yet she may.'

All of which conversation I passed over to Amy upon my return.

'Verily, Amy, it is time thou quitted Muscovish soil,' said I, 'for truly there is something in thee very fatal to the hearts of the Tsar and his men.'

But Amy was not in the mood for smiling. 'I would to Heaven that the prince might also, like ourselves, remain somewhere in sanctuary until the dawn of a better day.'

'Wouldst thou then do as he desires?' I said, laughing, this time without affectation, for to me it seemed that fire and water might as soon make common cause as Amy and the Cæsarevitch.

'I said not so,' replied Amy flushing. 'I would have him dwell in safety, poor youth. One day the Tsar's dubina may fall more heavily upon him than it has yet fallen.'

Words which I remembered at a subsequent time and remembered with wonder as a prophetic utterance, though Amy then repudiated with horror the idea that she had foreseen anything approaching in tragic awfulness the actual event.

CHAPTER XXX.

By nine o'clock that same evening Amy and I were at the Northern Gate of the city, and there, close at hand, we found Krapatkin's *troika*, or three-horsed sledge, in waiting, the driver most anxiously awaiting Amy's appearance, for, as he told us with tears in his eyes, his poor master's goods and serfs—all that were found in his Moscow house—were forfeit to the Tsar, and, in order to keep tryst with us, he had been obliged to leave home early and to wait about in the streets until it was time to be at his place of appointment, otherwise both he and his horses would by this time have been claimed by the Tsar's men.

'If thou art anxious to be out of Moscow we are even more so,' said I. 'Therefore drive as though the evil one were behind thee all a-pant after thy soul.'

And drive he did, right well.

Meanwhile there was stir at the terem. The hour came at which the ladies were wont to retire to bed, nine o'clock, and to the consternation of the duenna whose duty it was to see all the rules of the establishment strictly kept, news was brought her that the Anglichanka had not returned home.

'How? Not returned? When went she forth? Stay, she attends the Tsar, be sure. No maiden would be out of doors at this time; it is impossible!'

Had the duenna only guessed it, there were many impossibilities constantly performed by the ladies under her charge, unseen and unguessed by herself.

'She went forth,' said Maria Nagoy, 'late in the afternoon, when she returned from the Tsar's presence. His Grace should know of this. I think he will not approve such conduct, even from the witch-Anglichanka!'

Ten o'clock came, and none had retired to bed, for Amy had not appeared, and all were too much interested in this matter to

think of sleeping. Maria sent a messenger for one of her brothers, Afanassy, who lived close at hand.

When the boyar arrived he was closeted with his sister awhile in close consultation; and when this was over Nagoy left the terem in order to present himself at the Tsar's quarters.

'He goes to acquaint the Tsar with the disgraceful conduct of the Anglichanka,' said Maria. 'Is it not scandal enough that she shows herself openly in the streets at all hours? but to be abroad at night!'

'If the boyar is going to tell the Tsar of Amy's absence, he is a bold man,' said Olga. 'Keep an eye upon his dubina, boyar!' she added.

'Someone must go; and frankly I would it were not I!' replied Nagoy.

He went, nevertheless, but found that the Tsar had already retired to sleep.

'He must be summoned,' said Nagoy; 'I have news of importance.'

'Is it good news?' asked the page in attendance; 'if not, be warned and let it wait until to-morrow!'

'Good or bad, it must be told to-night; you shall wake the Tsar, my friend.'

'Oh, I dare not!' said the youth, paling. 'There is another, an Oprichinnik, who waits even now with bad news which, says he, should be told the Tsar—some story of the Anglichanka for whom his Grace has lately developed a foolish spring madness—but how should I dare wake him from sleep to tell him such a tale?'

'Dear saints!' exclaimed Nagoy, crossing himself, 'and what, then, is this tale?'

'This fellow, the Oprichinnik, declares that being at about nine o'clock in the neighbourhood of the Northern Gate, he distinctly saw the Anglichanka come with that long English rascal, whose name I forget, but who was imprisoned by the Tsar and escaped by grace of Krapatkin (who has since expiated the offence). There was no mistaking either, says my man, for he had seen the lady more than once, and was one of those who arrested the long Englishman. Well, these two entered a sledge with *troika*, a boyar's equipage, which there awaited them, and bade the driver let the horses go as though the devil himself were in pursuit.'

'Has not the man made a mistake?' said Nagoy, half frightened and half overjoyed; for if this were true it would be a dangerous matter to inform the Tsar of it, which duty might probably

devolve upon himself; and yet, if the Anglichanka had really done this, why, here was an end of her interference between Maria his sister and the Tsar, Amy being an obstacle to Maria's greatness and, indirectly, to his own, which had come near to overtoppling altogether the edifice of the Nagoy ambitions.

'Nay,' replied the page, 'how can I know whether the fellow speaks truly or falsely? He shall tell his own tale when the Tsar is told!'

'Ay, he shall tell it himself,' said Nagoy, much relieved. 'Nevertheless, my friend, I think the Tsar will not readily forgive us if we withhold this news one moment longer than is necessary. Go, summon the Oprichinnik; then his Grace must be awakened, and that done, if thou art afraid, leave the rest to me and to this common fellow to whose tale my own is a kind of corroboration.'

So the young page, full of terror for his mission, went and roused the Tsar, who might be heard from the anteroom angrily demanding of the disturber of his peace the reason for his waking, and following this the timid voice of the page who replied that the Boyar Nagoy and another, an Oprichinnik, had news which must be told the Tsar at once, but as to which he himself knew nothing, only that these two men insisted. Thus the page escaped the danger he feared, and the wrath of the Tsar was reserved for others. Upon the Oprichinnik fell the brunt of it. For when he had told his tale and his Grace had caused him to repeat it, word for word, the Tsar suddenly fell upon him with his dubina, cudgelling him so soundly that the wretched fellow yelled for his life and limped away presently wounded and scarcely able to drag himself from Caesar's presence.

'Now for thy tale,' said his Grace, turning furiously upon Nagoy.

'Tsar,' said Nagoy, standing boldly, for the Nagoy is no coward, 'if I bring bad news, I do so not in lack of zeal but rather in excess of zeal for thy service.'

'Thy tale, thy tale,' said the Tsar.

'Tis only that the Anglichanka has not returned to-night to the terem. My sister——'

'Ah—ah! thy sister and thou together—there we have the kernel of it. Thinkest thou, Nagoy, that I see not through these fool's tricks of thine and hers? Amy is an obstacle to her greatness and thine, therefore this tale is trumped up to set my heart against an innocent woman; come, confess quickly, it is a lie from the beginning—is it not? The girl Amy has been hidden

away by thy sister and thee, or thy brothers, that she may not stand between Maria and her ambitions.'

The Tsar stood glaring and panting, his tongue moistening from time to time his lips, which trembled with passion or with agitation. Nagoy remained silent, standing with bent head before him, his eye, nevertheless, upon the dubina which was held by the Tsar's trembling hand.

'Speak, Nagoy,' said Ivan. 'Tell me this man's tale is a lie, and by the God who made us both and whose Name he glorified for ever, thou shalt be the greatest boyar in my realm.'

'Tsar, I would to heaven I could say the words thou desirest to hear. I was not at the gate, and cannot therefore corroborate this man's tale, though his is a corroboration of my own. Shall I prove my zeal? Let the Tsar say the word and I will ride this very hour in pursuit. If I should bring back this Englishwoman alive then shalt thou believe that we Nagoy's have had no hand in her disappearance. Shall I ride, Tsar?'

'Yes—ride, ride—take others with thee, three at least, for this Shadwell is great and strong, and he will be desperate. If thou find, Nagoy, that the Oprichinnik has spoken truly, and the girl——' The Tsar paused and sat down, too agitated to complete his sentence. For a moment the muscles of his body worked, his hands clasped and unclasped, the dubina fell from his grasp with a clatter, his mouth opened and closed, and his face twitched.

'The Tsar is ill,' said Nagoy. 'I will summon a——'

'If thou findest it thus,' continued the Tsar, bracing himself suddenly and fixing upon the boyar a most malignant and terrible look, 'thou shalt not leave of this Shadwell a piece of flesh so large as would feed a crow—dost thou fully understand me?' Nagoy bowed his head.

'It shall be as the Tsar commands,' he said. 'As for the maiden, she shall be brought back to Moscow.'

Ivan uttered an exclamation of intense fury.

'Fool and idiot!' he cried; 'I said not so—she shall be brought neither alive nor dead. She shall not be parted from her lover; with his dust shall mingle hers, and with his bones shall rot her own; cut them to pieces, both, Nagoy, curse them! Dost thou understand me, Nagoy? With thy life thou shalt answer for thy obedience.'

'I understand,' said Nagoy, horrified with his mission, yet daring to utter no appeal for mercy. He would gladly, if he had

dared, counsel the Tsar to allow these lovers to escape whither they would, so they returned not to interfere with his sister's ambitions.

'Go then, quickly. Stay! thou shalt count the pieces into which thy sword has carved this snake whom I have nourished in my bosom; for every piece there shall be a curse pronounced upon her soul by my priests once every year, I swear it.'

Nagoy returned to his house to prepare for departure. He roused his brother Alexis and told him all. Alexis grew pale first, then furious.

'By St. Cyril, brother,' he cried, 'thou art a knave if thou hast promised obedience to the Tsar's most damnable commands.'

'What else should I do, fool, when the Tsar raves?'

'Slay the Englishman Shadwell, if thou wilt,' continued Alexis, hastily dressing himself; 'but by St. Michael and all his angels thou shalt not lay a finger upon the girl.'

'Wilt thou, then, pose as her protector against the commands of Cæsar?' asked his brother.

'Ay, that I will indeed,' cried Alexis. 'I shall ride with thee, moreover, to see that neither thou nor another dishonour her by word or deed.'

'God knows I would rather she lived and escaped over sea or whither she will,' said the elder brother; 'only, if thou must be a fool, temper thy foolishness with wisdom, Alexis—what wouldst thou?'

'I have not yet thought, but she shall live, that I swear; and the Tsar shall not know it, that I swear also, for I will stick like a pig any man who blabs, even though it were my own brother.'

'Who is the least likely to blab,' laughed the elder Nagoy, 'for Maria's sake, if not for thine and the girl's.'

'Well, we shall see,' said Alexis, still angry. 'I will ride with thee, for I will trust no one who goes in fear of our Tsar-devil. Who is of our party?'

'Krimsky, I thought of, and perhaps young Belsky.'

And so it befell that soon after midnight there rode in pursuit of us four strong and determined men—the two Nagoy, Belsky, and Krimsky.

(To be continued.)

The House of Commons from the Inside :

WITH SOME ADVICE TO NEW MEMBERS.

WHEN the House of Commons was built, about sixty years ago, the accommodation provided was doubtless sufficient for the members of that time, who were mostly country gentlemen living on their land, cut off from town by difficulty of locomotion and not expected to give more than occasional attention to their Parliamentary business ; and, therefore, under a changed order of things, we who are in more regular attendance, and have paid large sums of money for our seats, are now twice too many for the green benches, and have to put up with close and stuffy smoking-rooms, cramped libraries, and newspaper and tea rooms—and on a crowded night, if we succeed in finding a place, we dine under conditions of hurry and discomfort which render the process of digestion decidedly precarious.

All these drawbacks are bound to increase rather than diminish as time goes on. Much more is expected from members of Parliament nowadays. Constituencies not unnaturally expect their representatives to give reasonable attention to their business. Contests are frequent, seats can only be made secure by constant work, and no amount of personal prestige or popularity will prevent disaster, unless they are linked to careful management of local interests and continuous appearance on the division-lists, which are published with disconcerting regularity. And then the modern member of Parliament is very different from his easy-going predecessor, who merely casually lounged into St. Stephen's as suited his convenience. He is frequently a clever, industrious, ambitious young man, full of political zeal, trained in business, and bubbling over with the oratorical fluency which he has acquired at school or college, the Eighty Club, or the various political organisations to which he may chance to belong. He makes his Parliamentary work his business, and sits on the green benches with praiseworthy regularity ; and so overcrowding, which is even now occasionally

inconvenient, must necessarily become more and more so in the future as continuous attendance becomes a popular and permanent habit.

Things, however, are fairly well arranged for the comfort of members. You can eat, you can drink, and be as merry as a somewhat crowded and stuffy smoking-room will allow. You can play chess, but not bridge, you can use unlimited note-paper, and wire and telephone in all directions, and crowds of messenger-boys sit waiting to waft your orders to the uttermost parts of London at an absolutely inadequate charge. Not only do we have our own tea-room upstairs, but, on the Terrace, a rigidly guarded end is reserved for those who are impervious to the seductions of the other sex; and if you wish to snatch forty winks in a comfortable arm-chair, magazines and dull books are provided, and a roasting fire in winter, before which you may sleep and dream of a seat on the front bench. But you will soon find that it is hopeless to do any serious work in the House of Commons. You have just sat down, pen or book in hand, when the division-bell rings, or someone comes wanting a pair, or a card is brought in, and you must run away to see whether there is any room in the gallery. Or you get fidgety and impatient, and in spite of the ingenious indicator which tells you who the orator for the moment is, it is difficult to sit still, for you hear cheers and laughter, and you cannot settle down until you have taken a look to see what is going on inside. No one can get the full benefit of the House of Commons, or do useful work there, unless he makes politics his profession. To make the most of that most critical and difficult assembly demands the complete energy, industry, and ability at the command of any one man. You have first to get over your early disappointments, not only the worm-like feeling of absolute insignificance, but the continuous interruptions and obstructions placed in the way of the private member. To begin with, you ballot at the beginning of the Session for Bills and motions; but as several hundred competitors are operating at the same game, your chances of drawing a prize are small. And then during the rest of the Session there are often more days to be used; but, again, others often desire to use them, and unless you have exceptional luck, you will be left out in the cold, whatever the weather may be. The debate on the Address gives a chance of ventilating grievances; but no one pays serious attention to amendments moved then, and unless you get in early, the guillotine cuts the head off your tale of woe. Questions provide an opening, and the Estimates are a fairly good outlet for

legislative gas ; but here, again, things often go badly—a want of the due sense of proportion makes members fight too long over minor points, and the inordinate length of speeches shuts out many deserving speakers. If you wish to move the adjournment of the House, you will find that some minor satellite of the Government eager for promotion is before you, with a blocking motion, and if you are coming on yourself at nine o'clock with a motion of your own, someone will move the adjournment of the House, and snatch your opportunity away. And then, when you have perhaps drawn a good day and arranged an important debate, the Government, with the burglarious instincts of place and power, will take all the time of the House, and offer up your little one ewe lamb as an unwilling sacrifice on the altar of so-called public duty.

To get the best out of political life you must be always on the spot, scorning the delights of social life, living laborious days, and watching the opportunity which so often comes in the most unexpected way. Disraeli's great success as leader was due to his continual attendance in the House, where he literally lived, dining and dreaming, and apparently sleeping until the moment came for action.

When the Session is over, do not think that your work will be over too. If you have foolishly acquired a platform reputation; you will be sent about to every by-election, to help some of those lame ducks whom the authorities—for reasons best known to themselves—choose as candidates, over the political stiles which their webbed feet and clipped wings are unable to surmount.

And then you have your own business. Bazaars, flower-shows, social gatherings, cattle-shows, and dinners claim your attention ; and, later in the season, you have to meet your constituents to give an account of your stewardship, and have your head patted as a good boy, or the reverse.

There are, of course, the two sides of the House, occupied by Ministers and the Opposition, the front row called the ' bench ' by its *habitués*, and the back rows where the rank-and-file sit and cheer their leader. In the Lords there are seats where peers of cross-bench minds sit and criticise everybody and everything ; but in the Commons nothing of the kind exists, and above and below the gangway marks the only line of demarcation between the somewhat variegated sections of political thought which now split up the Lower House.

We secure our places for the night by attending prayers, and then placing a card in a little frame. Formerly we were obliged to

lay our hat on our seat and remain in the precincts of the House ; but this led to unseemly juggling with sham substitutes, and when Dr. Tanner provided the *reductio ad absurdum* by coming down one day in a four-wheeled cab laden with decayed 'toppers,' which he proceeded to distribute in the Irish quarter, some other and better way was seen to be needed ; and we now place a card on our prospective seat at any hour, which, when afterwards settled *in situ*, secures our place for the evening. There is no continuous fixity of tenure, save by courtesy rather than of right in corner places, usually inhabited by extinct volcanoes—ex-Ministers who have passed the chair and been dropped out of the sacred official circle ; and very tenacious of this small remaining tag of dignity they usually are. The front benches never pray, because they get their sitting-room provided without that formality ; and it is only when they are crowded out on full-dress occasions that they condescend to mix with the common herd. Privy Councillors and the Lord Mayor, who belongs, during his year of office, to that august body, have a right to sit there ; but they seldom use the privilege, and retired Ministers are sometimes invited to sit beside their more actively employed brethren.

It is unlawful to address the House from behind the Bar, and the only time I ever heard a speech made from the gallery was by Mr. Mitchell Henry. He was moving for an inquiry into our accommodation, and, being crowded out down below, he appropriately enough gave point to his complaints by firing them off from the superior coign of vantage up aloft.

The 'Bar' of the House, when drawn out so as to meet across the gangway, cannot be 'crossed,' but it has some interesting associations.

Mr. Bradlaugh, during the time of stress and struggle which marked the outset of his career, once made a most impressive speech from behind it ; and I also well remember when Mr. Maclure and his brother railway directors were admonished in dignified tones by Mr. Speaker Peel for that worst of all Parliamentary offences, dismissing or oppressing witnesses who had given inconvenient evidence before a Committee. The Sheriffs sometimes appear there, *minus* their swords, which cannot be worn within the precincts of the House, and are formally asked by the Speaker, 'Mr. Sheriff, what have you there ?' And then the petition of the City of London is formally read.

The Speaker is, of course, the chief functionary, and invariably performs difficult and delicate duties with tact, dignity, and

impartiality. His work is hard and responsible, for he must sit without moving or sleeping from two to half-past seven, and again from nine to twelve; but, happily for his constitution, he is relieved from time to time by the Chairman, who presides when the House gets into Committee. He cannot, however, leave the House, and must hang about in full official costume in case of emergency, and to wind up the proceedings at twelve o'clock. He is provided with a handsome house and a salary of 5000*l.*, but he has to entertain a third of the members every year, keep up a big establishment, and run two levees, in addition to private hospitality; so I do not suppose that when he retires on a peerage and a pension of 4000*l.*, he has a large accumulated store of savings to soothe his declining years.

The Speaker keeps order, interprets the rules of the House, calls on members to speak, when they 'catch his eye,' and names and suspends them when they defy his authority.

A leading member of Parliament once asked an even more experienced colleague what happened when anyone was named in the House of Commons, and the answer was, 'God only knows.' But now it has become a matter of common occurrence, and suspension from the service of the House for a certain regulated period, usually a week, is the only result. Dr. Playfair, as he then was, carried out a regular *coup d'état* when he suspended the whole Irish party, some of whom were comfortably at home and in bed when sentence was pronounced; and, not so long ago, the services of the police were called into requisition, and a silly piece of childish petulance ended by the bulk of the Irishmen being carried out of the House shouting and gesticulating and singing as only the inhabitants of the distressful country can. But now and then, in very bad cases of revolt, the offender is sent to the clock-tower, where Mr. Bradlaugh spent a few days about twenty years ago, and where, I understand, comfortable accommodation exists.

The work of the Chairman is complicated and difficult, for he has to run Bills through Committee, keep speakers within the limits of relevance and order, and decide whether amendments, often suddenly flung at his head, are consistent with one another or with the scope and purpose of the Bill. The three clerks arrange the business of the House, instruct the Speaker on knotty points of procedure, and edit the questions. Their handling of this last delicate bit of work often gives rise to angry recriminations, for the Irish brigade are especially touchy at any interference with the national exuberance of their style, and bitterly resent it if their

detail of the woes of their constituents is cut down or softened away. But certain definite rules must be obeyed. It is not in order to introduce argumentative matter into a question, or to quote from a newspaper, or to use heated or inflated language, and Irish exuberance is sometimes rather trying to those who have to administer the law impartially; and my experience is that the clerks do their duty with tact, discretion, and courtesy. The senior has a salary of 1500*l.* and a good house; and from the days of Sir Erskine May he has been looked upon as the supreme authority on all matters of procedure, and continues to edit the book written by that master hand. The junior clerks do Committee and division work, give out gallery orders, and perform a variety of minor duties which do not seriously absorb their mental energies or prevent them from enjoying a clear annual holiday of six months.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is an imposing but most courteous official, who carries the mace at the head of the Speaker's procession, gives audible expression to the responses at prayer-time, removes named members, gives orders during the sitting of the House, and maintains a regulated routine of order and discipline which awes young, and satisfies old, members. He has two deputies, one of whom relieves him from time to time in the chair, and the other looks after the servants and the domestic arrangements. The chaplain draws 300*l.* per annum for reading prayers and eating the Speaker's dinners, and a skilled superintendent is in charge of the elaborate ventilation and sanitary arrangements of the House.

Every year, just before the meeting of Parliament, an agitation is started during the 'silly season,' when journalistic material is running short, about the ventilation of the House of Commons and the ravages of the all-conquering microbe; and those who have never sat on the green benches gravely inform those who do that their health must seriously suffer from living in such an unhygienic atmosphere. Fortunately for the more credulous among us, this subject has been most carefully threshed out before three Parliamentary Committees, on all of which I sat, and which gave, on the whole, very encouraging reports. The situation of St. Stephen's is hardly an ideal one, for it is on the banks of a sluggish tidal river, the air from which must be relaxing in quality, and now and then broad reaches of slushy mud would seem to challenge the attention of the sanitary inspector. No doubt in the Strangers' Gallery, and that stuffy hole the ladies' cage, and the quarters allotted to the fourth estate, the atmosphere, gas-heated, and breathed and re-breathed by crowds of legislators, can hardly be regarded as

typically bracing. But down below, where we sit, it is wonderfully fresh and free from the faded stuffiness which makes itself painfully obvious in every other large public building with which I have any practical acquaintance, and the evidence of experts, taken before the House of Commons Committees, confirms me in my belief that, considering the sources of supply, the artificial methods of ventilation, the foreign material carried in by members boots, and blown aloft by the currents of wind streaming through the perforated floor, and the habitual overcrowding of the House from time to time, the air is wonderfully pure and good, and cannot do harm even to the most infirm legislator. The only criticism I would make is that it is perhaps too highly rarefied, and that the enervating effect of a prolonged sederunt is probably due to its being too hot and dry, and not enough refreshed by the simple plan of throwing all the windows wide open.

Under special conditions, special precautions are taken for our welfare. In tropical weather the air is iced, and when dense fogs destroy the comfort of outsiders we sit calmly inside in the full enjoyment of an atmosphere which has been efficiently filtered through thick layers of cotton-wool. The health of members of the House seems to be pretty much the same as that of ordinary mortals, and the occasional scare which runs through the papers is due to the fact that we bulk rather more largely in the public eye, and that our occasional ailments are therefore chronicled for public information. Some years ago there undoubtedly was a serious epidemic of influenza hailing from Sheffield, and communicated, like the victim of the black assizes, with almost startling suddenness to judges and jury alike. At that time the Committee-rooms were stuffy and badly ventilated, and provided a typically effective field for the ravages of the microbe; but since the excellent system of electric fans has been introduced, we have heard nothing more of this kind of wholesale infection.

From some points of view our arrangements are better than they used to be, and from some worse. The effect of the new rules is unsatisfactory, as in cutting away domestic lunches, giving an illusionary dinner-period, and abolishing the hours from half-past eight to ten, when humble folk used to address audiences occasionally composed of the Speaker, and perhaps two or three others, who, held by the glittering eye, could not choose but hear; thus year by year the chances of private members grow less and less, and the power of the Executive grows more, for the appetite always comes with eating. We now have a twelve-

o'clock rule, which is rarely suspended, and a closure, to prevent those alternate movements for adjournment which, in spiteful hands, used to keep us sitting up for nights in succession. Our air is almost as good as it can be made; for although it has been shown to be crowded with microbes, they are not pathogenic, and Sir Michael Foster assures us that these predominant creatures may be good as well as bad, and may be our saviours as well as our destroyers; and, finally, thanks to Mr. Shone and his ejectors, we are now cut off from the main sewer with which we were formerly in free and friendly communication, and the sewer-gas, which we used to breathe, is now obliged to find accommodation elsewhere.

Let us now consider the ordinary daily routine of a member of Parliament's life. His breakfast-hour must, of course, be regulated by the time of his going to bed. In the bad old days of the past, under which we groaned too long, we were considered rather well off if we escaped from the House at two—four was the average hour, six was not uncommon, and now and then we sat up all night. We now get away much earlier, but when we have worked through our divisions, and struggled home by the means of conveyance best suited to our pocket, smoked the pipe of peace, imbibed some virtuous or deleterious beverage, and glanced over our evening letters, it is usually one o'clock before the soothing sheets receive us.

I strongly advise politicians never to take less than eight hours in bed. Sleep may be sometimes difficult after an exciting night, and all kinds of remedies have been proposed. Gladstone brewed himself, not 'a peck o' maut,' but a cup of tea, and, leaving his load of care outside his bedroom-door, plunged with characteristic energy into a novel vouched for by his daughter, the censor of the Press. Some take hot water, with or without spirituous admixture, and it is well to remember that sleep is often prevented by want of a little nourishment. Most of us, as we get older, wake earlier; but do not be hypervirtuous and get up then. Lying down rests the hard-worked heart and muscles and lungs, and the time between sleeping and waking is universally admitted to be the best time for thinking out any difficult problem—a coming speech, or a magazine article, or the best way of refusing the numerous applications for subscriptions which shower on the green hand's table by every post. Breakfast should be a deliberate meal, punctuated by the opening of letters and a leisurely skimming of the morning paper; and in time you will get over the annoyance of finding that the remarks, which were apparently well received by the House the night before, are boiled down into a few lines, that your name is

perhaps omitted altogether, or that, by a crowning act of grace, you are permitted with others to 'continue the discussion.'

Next, to tackle your correspondence seriously. Do not use a typewriter or a secretary if you can help it—a personally written letter is far more effective; even Cabinet Ministers, as a rule, answer all the communications from members with their own hand.

Committees begin at twelve, and last for four hours, and I should advise the young member to pay great attention to this kind of work. Not only is it interesting and important, but after he has sat on them for years, the Committee of Selection, who watch carefully the capacity of members, may, if he has been successful, make him a chairman, and I know no post outside the Government, to which a member can aspire, more useful and dignified than this. It is very difficult to persuade outsiders that you get no pay for this kind of service, the only possible emolument being the 1*l.* a day paid to those serving on Departmental Committees, which barely pays their hotel-bills.

Questions start at two, and you may be taking part in this most useful cross-examination, which has done much, indirectly rather than directly, to remove abuses, check extravagances, and promote reforms. If you are a London member, you are kept pretty well on the trot all the afternoon interviewing constituents, and in too often unsuccessful efforts to get them and their sisters and their cousins and their aunts into the galleries adapted for the reception of their respective sexes. Next comes tea in the small stuffy room above ground, a smoke in the very limited accommodation provided for flirtation with Lady Nicotine, and a stroll on the Terrace, either with or without your lady friends, to see what is doing there. This you will find most attractive; and I do not suppose there can be found a more brilliant or animated scene than on our Terrace, when the sun shines on eight or nine hundred occasionally beautiful and interesting people, between four and eight. Some sour-visaged puritans, over-eager for our workaday reputation, would like to stop all this, basing their opposition on the observation once made by a working man passing by on a steam-boat, who shouted out the cutting sarcasm, 'Why don't you go inside and attend to your business?' The abolition of the Terrace would really eclipse the gaiety of nations, deprive members of the power of giving cheap and pleasant entertainment to their constituents, and the taxpayer of the right to share in some way the life of an institution maintained by the unremitting assiduity of Mr. Lillyvick.

What saved the Terrace was a happy inspiration of the present Speaker. Formerly, when members turned up during the absurdly short interval between the first and second division-bells, they were frequently blocked by little groups of ladies, leisurely trooping down to enjoy China tea and buttered buns. Mr. Gully bethought him of a way out of the difficulty, and ordered the construction of another flight of steps for strangers; and since then everything has gone merrily and happily, save for the occasional snarl of some zealous critic, whose insular exclusiveness has not been sufficiently maintained by the end of the Terrace specially devoted to the misogynist temporary and permanent bachelors, who grumble at the brilliant butterfly groups which flit about in every variety of costume.

But this pleasant scene must not attract you too long, for business beckons you inside, and you may lose the thread of the debate, or miss some important speech, by lingering among the pleasure-seekers down below. When you have listened your fill, the clock points to 7.30, and the interval of an hour and a half is at your disposal, when dinner and evening parties may claim the attention even of politicians. It is well to be somewhat sparing in dietetic affairs, for it is difficult to get enough exercise; and a big feed every night, topped up by a week-end, makes a trip to Homburg or Marienbad a necessity. My old friend George Anderson used to say, 'It is not the work of the House, but dining out, that kills a man.' But the constitution must be maintained, for the life of the House is undoubtedly wearing, and you must try and attain the happy medium between judicious moderation and 'doing yourself too well.' So, putting himself under the guidance of some old Parliamentary hand, when it is necessary to stoke up the internal fires by timely nourishment, let the 'tenderfoot' wend his way to the dining-room and see what is provided for him there. He will find that for a shilling he can get sufficient food; that two shillings gives him a dinner of five courses; that, if he rises higher in the scale of expenditure, he can entertain himself or his friends really well and cheaply; and that excellent wines at club prices are furnished in exuberant variety. And when eating and drinking are over, and coffee and tobacco are the next items on the programme, a move is made to the Terrace, and a glittering and most picturesque scene awaits him there. In spite of occasional difficulties, everything is satisfactorily managed by a Kitchen Committee, with the smart and cheerful Colonel Lockwood at their head, who get a subvention of 3000*l.* a

year, and do little more than pay their way. But a good deal of money must change hands, for last year 23,481 dinners, 24,286 luncheons, and 5850 meals at the bar made, with 34,000 teas, a grand total of nearly 88,000.

When twelve o'clock strikes, the sonorous voice of the door-keeper calls out, 'Who goes home?' And although it is no longer necessary to make up little parties for mutual protection against 'footpads' or Mohawks, the announcement that all is over is most grateful to the jaded legislator who has had a long and weary strain. For, unfortunately, there is no eight-hour day for members of Parliament.

There are some things that you must do, and others that you must not do, in the House of Commons. For instance, when you have crossed the Bar you must bow respectfully to the Speaker. When you rise up to speak you must be uncovered; but, after a division is called, and you wish to raise a point of order, you must do it with your hat on your head, and this gives rise sometimes to amusing incidents. I remember once 'assisting' at a Jewish dinner, where the host read a long grace, during which everyone had to put on whatever headgear he could raise at the moment. One of the guests was provided with an old Gibus, the internal machinery of which was painfully obtrusive, and this he had to wear during the ceremony, much to the amusement of his neighbours. During last Session, Mr. Crooks wished to say something, and, having nothing handy to put on, he was lent an opera-hat, which gave a ludicrous look to the sturdy head of our much-respected friend; and those who saw it can never forget the occasion when Gladstone, who never wore a hat in the House, had to surmount his mighty cranium with a 'topper' hurriedly snatched from the head of his neighbour Herschell.

The forbidden things are numerous. It is a serious Parliamentary crime to pass between a speaker and the Chair, and loud cries of 'Order!' greatly confuse the neophyte who makes this mistake for the first time. Then you must not put up both legs at the same time. A front-bench man may loll on the small of his back and plant his boots on the table without remonstrance; but his humble satellites are sharply pulled up by the Sergeant-at-Arms if they venture to follow his example. You must not ostentatiously read a book or a newspaper (I once saw Mr. Chamberlain pulled up for quoting from a file of the *Times*) or open letters in the House, or read your speech; and if you indulge in tedious repetition you may be admonished by the

Speaker if any common informer puts the law in motion. Nor are you allowed to eat anything from your place on the green benches. I remember, during one of the all-night sittings, the late Mr. A. M. Sullivan produced, towards the small hours, a paper bag, and proceeded to feed himself with jam puffs, and when his attention was directed to this irregularity by the Chairman, he replied, 'I thought, Mr. Playfair, that we were in committee of supply.'

Dress regulations were strict in former days, and the late Mr. Cowen was obliged to get the Speaker's leave before he could wear, at the instruction of his doctor, a soft felt hat. Colonel Gourley told me that he was called up to the Chair and warned that it was out of order to exchange the more formal costume of society for a cut-away coat. This is all changed now, and every variety of costume is allowed. Mr. Keir Hardie has replaced his deerstalker by a sort of Spanish *sombrero*; and billycocks of every shape and size surmount the cranium of House members. I have very rarely seen a straw decorating, in somewhat defiant fashion, the austere brows of a Radical below the gangway; and once, during tropical heat, a perspiring senator might be seen hard at work in the library with his coat off.

Swords may only be worn by the mover and seconder of the Address. Even the Sheriffs of London, and that awe-inspiring functionary the City Marshal, are disarmed before they appear at the Bar; and I remember one occasion when a member, going to some official function, who was sitting with self-conscious pride in the full glories of a Court suit, had his dignity rudely disturbed by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who there and then divested him of his weapon, and left him defenceless.

It is become almost a colloquial and journalistic commonplace to say that our manners are bad and want mending. Twenty-four years' experience of our proceedings enables me to contradict this assertion. We do not profess to be better than the average run of humanity, though we compare most favourably with other legislatures. The House of Commons is full of worries, of disappointments, of foiled ambitions and blighted hopes; and irritation might seem justified when you have obtained a good opportunity of doing something and it is ruined by a count or an adjournment, or a blocking motion, or the fatal words 'I object.' But it is a wonderful school of discipline, and characters and tempers are moulded by living there under conditions of perfect equality and democratic good-fellowship. Bores cease from worrying platform exuberance is checked, social side is soon dropped,

and the labour member is as much respected as, and probably takes a much better position than, the swell ; and courtesy and consideration and mutual forbearance are taught by example if not by precept, and successfully practised by high and low. Of course, certain phases of human nature will occasionally assert themselves, and things are said in the heat of debate which are withdrawn in the cooler moments of reflection ; and the Speaker and Chairmen of Committees drive their team with a tight but elastic rein, and show great tact and judgment in the management of the House. Nothing surprises outsiders more than to see fierce combatants, who have given and received hard knocks inside the House, walk out of it arm-in-arm, and fight their battles o'er again over a cup of tea or a cigar. This is the true British spirit, and long may it continue to maintain that character for honour, and integrity, and justice which forms the proud inheritance of our Parliamentary system.

Popularity always reminds me of the bloom on the peach—a delicate thing, easily displaced, and not readily replaced. It is difficult to say how it is acquired, and why many a man, with all the gifts and accomplishments most acceptable to his fellows, remains a *persona ingrata* to the end of his days. So the new member must ‘gang’ very warily at his first start, for first impressions are all-important. To begin with, he must avoid making himself prominent too early in his career. A foolish and bumptious Radical member had hardly been three days on the green benches before he told me of the advice he had received, ‘that it was a good thing for a young member to get early into collision with the Speaker.’ He did so, and with disastrous results, for his swelled head got an ugly knock, and his constituents wisely agreed to dispense with his services at the next general election.

Be careful not rashly to appropriate any senior member’s seat. ‘Corner men’ are especially touchy on this point. Twenty years ago Dr. Lyons, a leading Dublin physician, used to carry on an unsuccessful warfare with the late W. E. Forster. The doctor used to come early, plant himself in the corner, whence, with self-satisfied air and ample white waistcoat, he surveyed mankind ; but the day of reckoning was at hand. The ex-Cabinet Minister, lurching and swaying heavily, rolled with unconscious air up the centre of the House, and, with an easy unconcern, prepared to plant himself on his medical colleague’s lap ; and the doctor made his escape just in time, for it was no joke to be sat upon by Forster.

And this little farce was repeated daily until an ungrateful Dublin found that it could get on without Lyons, and thus withdrew from the House one of its most respected and earnest members, too early removed by death from the profession which he adorned.

It is well not to try to speak too soon. Randolph Churchill only opened his mouth once during his first Session, and that was to ask a question. John Morley sat watching and listening for months before he ventured to catch the Speaker's eye, and his first performance was by no means successful. We all know the story of Disraeli's early collapse, and a more tragic episode is thus related by Lord North's son, Frederick: 'I once attempted to speak in Parliament. I brought out two or three sentences, when a mist seemed to rise before my eyes. I then lost my recollection, and could see nothing but the Speaker's wig, which swelled and swelled till it covered the whole House; I then sank back in my seat and never tried to speak again, and immediately applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, feeling convinced that Parliament was not my vocation.'

Physiologists have never attempted to explain why people who are loquacious, and even garrulous, as long as they maintain the sweet security of a seat, halt and stutter, and perhaps break down hopelessly, when they attempt to speak on their legs. Every one of us must some time or other have suffered from one of these sudden lapses of memory. Lord Rosebery, not long ago, came to a dead halt in the middle of a speech; Lowe's hopeless collapse in the House of Commons is still painfully remembered; and poor Black Rod, on his first appearance, clean forgot the message from the Lords; not even Campbell-Bannerman's promptings restored his memory, and the Speaker was obliged to say that he understood that a message was being brought to ask the attendance of the Lower House in the Lords. And even Jupiter has nodded. Mr. Gladstone himself once lost his cue and stopped abruptly; when Disraeli bent forward and said, 'The right honourable gentleman's last word was "so-and-so."'

It is well to watch for a good chance of talking on something you know something about, and if you once catch the ear of the House you will probably keep it. Be short and epigrammatic, avoid platform arts, and, above all things, classical or scriptural quotations; and it is not bad policy to sit down on your hat and endure the catastrophe with a good grace. Above everything, do not be bumptious. The maiden speech of a young member in last Parliament was described in felicitous phrasing by 'Toby,' as 'maidenly

but not modest'; and Chamberlain tells the story that, when he entered the House, he asked an experienced colleague for some straight tips. 'Well,' rejoined the mentor, 'you come into the House with an outside reputation, and they are not liked, so if you can only manage in your first speech to break down a little, the House will take it as a compliment, and it will do you good.' But I fear that this course could hardly be pursued by one of the most brilliant and experienced debaters of modern times.

Without going the length of a friend of mine—who deliberately, and without reproof, read his first harangue from typewritten slips—be careful to have pretty full notes, and do not trust too much to your memory, which may play you false and lead to the awkward collapse which we occasionally see in the House of Commons and elsewhere.

If you have been lucky enough to score a success with your virgin effort, lie low for a long time afterwards. More reputations have been damaged by untimely chatterings than by anything else. Sir Richard Temple, of whom great things were expected by himself and others, spoke twice in the first few days of entering the House, and was foolish enough the second time to move its adjournment because he could not get a hearing. Although he enjoyed its social side, he was never really comfortable there, and when he left, I asked him his reason for doing so. 'The House of Commons,' he replied, 'provides no adequate career for a man of my antecedents and position.' He had played a conspicuous and useful part in affairs, and, like all Anglo-Indians of note, he felt the come-down sadly. It is hard to sit down to cold mutton in Bayswater after the banquets at Government House, with the band playing the National Anthem as you enter the dining-room. Golden lords and ladies must, like chimney-sweepers, come to dust; and the first lesson to be learned by the new-fledged member is how all his fictitious importance crumbles away to nothing when he enters the House. If he has won an important by-election, he will be the hero of the hour; but for very little longer. The Cabinet Minister who effusively asks him to dinner one day will superciliously look over his head the next; his very fluency will desert him, he will compete in vain for the Speaker's eye on state occasions, and in the end he will fall into the rank of private members, meekly cheering his chiefs from the back benches, and following the rest of the dinner flock when the crack of the whip falls briskly upon his ear. From this he may emerge, if he has talent and energy or money, if he has force to make himself nasty, or if some smart lady interests

himself on his behalf. But, in nine cases out of ten, he must drop his early ambitions and settle down to the 'common round, the daily task' of the private member, and he will find compensations which more than counterbalance the drawbacks of his position.

We have now considered what the life of a member is. But how do we become one? Some people are lucky, and slip through the magic portals at once; others knock over and over again, and never get more than a glimpse of the promised land. Why is this? It is rather hard to say. And what makes a man a good candidate? First and foremost, it is most important to be perfectly straight and square. There is no harm, however, in changing your views, for some wise man once said, 'Whoever says that his opinions are unalterable is an unalterable ass!' But having once moulted, stick to your new feathers, and never wriggle or shuffle to please anyone. If you are asked a question, answer at once, and without consultation, and stick to your answer, always turning the laugh against the 'heckler' who is trying to trip you up, but being most careful not to offend a friend who merely wishes to afford you the chance of giving information on some topic untouched in your speech.

The expense of getting in is luckily much less than it used to be, and the Corrupt Practices Act has been a real blessing to candidates. There is now a regulated scale of expenditure, and although it is still higher than it should be, the gigantic sums paid out in former years, and which seriously crippled some of our leading county families, are happily mere ugly dreams of the past. In a borough we cannot spend more than 380*l.*, and an additional 30*l.* for every 1000 electors above 2000. In a county, 710*l.* is the limit, with 60*l.* more for every 1000 electors over 2000—the average being, in counties, from 1100*l.* to 1200*l.*; in boroughs, 400*l.* to 500*l.* Nursing a seat is often an expensive process, and may run to thousands a year; and if you have succeeded a rich man your annual subscription-list may be a heavy one. But a little tact and friendly judgment and firmness at the outset will usually see you through this kind of difficulty.

I have considered how to get into the House, what sort of lives we lead when we are there, and I now have to ask how we are to get out when health, pecuniary, or other reasons advise us to retire. Resignation would seem to be the obvious and simple means; but, for some extraordinary reason, this is not allowed. Some years ago, even insanity was no sufficient plea, for a madman could not take the necessary step, and no one else could

do it for him, and about 1881 a district of Glasgow was disfranchised for years because its representative was out of his mind, and could not make application for the Chiltern Hundreds. This difficulty has now been removed, and bankruptcy, and some forms of social offence, may lead to expulsion, and bribery may invalidate an election; but the ordinary member who wishes to retire into private life must apply for an office of profit under the Crown, the receiving of which makes his seat vacant. In former times the back forests which covered the Chiltern Hills were infested with robbers, and in order to restrain them and protect the peaceable inhabitants of the district from their ravages, it was usual for the Crown to appoint an officer who was called the Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds. This, being an office of profit under the Crown, is applied for by the retiring member, who resigns it as soon as it is conferred upon him, and is thus enabled to give up his seat and seek ease and repose in the peaceful retirement of his own home.

It is difficult to explain the strange, and almost weird, fascination of the House of Commons. Nearly everyone who has come under its spell, and has been obliged, voluntarily or involuntarily, to retire, wishes to return, and has a kind of disestablished feeling until he is once more securely landed on the green benches.

The Whip's room is eternally bombarded by the 'outs' who want to join the 'ins,' and by ambitious candidates who wish the official shove, and perhaps the official money; and the Lobby is haunted by pale disembodied spirits wishing to get back again into corporeal political existence, and they 'won't be happy till they get it.'

ROBERT FARQUHARSON.

Izaak Walton at Droxford.

THE interest in Izaak Walton continues unabated among cultured people; indeed, of late years it seems to have increased rather than diminished. Books dealing with his life are still published, and new editions of *The Compleat Angler* are issued from the Press. Among recent evidences that 'meek Walton's heavenly memory' is still cherished may be mentioned the proposal to fill with stained glass the window in Prior Silkstede's chapel above the spot where he lies in Winchester Cathedral. Within the last few months, too, a volume entitled *Izaak Walton and his Friends*,¹ already in its second edition, has been published, in which the writer, Mr. Stapleton Martin, endeavours to bring out the spiritual side of Walton's character.

And this interest in 'the best of fishermen and men' is not to be wondered at. In days of hurry and excitement, when 'the world is too much with us,' it is refreshing to turn to the pages of *The Compleat Angler*, which breathes in every line the spirit of contentment and peace. It is not that the book is of any special value as a treatise on fishing or natural history, for it is full of the quaintest and most antiquated conceits; rather it is the repose and tranquillity displayed throughout it that render the little volume of such enduring value to so many readers. 'Among all your readings,' wrote Charles Lamb to Coleridge, 'did you ever light upon *Walton's Compleat Angler*? It breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart. There are many choice old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant, angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it.' And this quality of serenity is the more remarkable when we remember the turbulent age in which it appeared. The King and the Archbishop had perished on the scaffold only a few years before; the Long Parliament had just been dissolved by Cromwell with the significant words, 'The Lord has done with you'; many of the most devoted

¹ Chapman & Hall. 1903.

of the clergy had recently been turned out of their livings; episcopacy was abolished; and a Royalist, such as Walton was, must have felt that his lot had indeed fallen on evil days. And yet his writings betray no resentment; not a harsh word, not an uncharitable judgment is met with; only gladness and purity and singleness of heart. It is to this aspect of his work that Keble refers when, in a well-known stanza of *The Christian Year*, he exclaims:

O who can tell how calm and sweet,
 Meek Walton! shews thy green retreat,
 When, wearied with the tale thy times disclose,
 The eye first finds thee out in thy secure repose?

The good man, as Wordsworth wrote of him upon a blank leaf in *The Compleat Angler*, was 'nobly versed in simple discipline,' and he could thank God for the smell of lavender, and the songs of birds, and a 'good day's fishing'; for 'health and a competence and a quiet conscience.' 'Every misery that I miss is a new mercy,' he says to his honest scholar, as they walk towards Tottenham High Cross, 'and therefore let us be thankful. What would a blind man give to see the pleasant rivers and meadows and flowers that we have met with since we met together; and this, and many other like blessings we enjoy daily.'

And *The Compleat Angler*, or the *Contemplative Man's Recreation* is a mirror of Izaak Walton's life. 'It is a picture,' as he says to the reader, 'of my own disposition.' And it was doubtless this spirit of 'gladsome piety,' this love of 'innocent, harmless mirth,' coupled with a deep vein of 'seriousness at seasonable times,' this power of detachment from the noisy movements of the world, this delight in the beauties of nature, this quality of 'meekness,' that enabled him to 'possess the earth,' which endeared the 'honest fisherman' to the hearts of so many distinguished men. Walton, it has been well said, had a genius for friendship. Although of comparatively humble birth and occupation, he was on terms of the closest intimacy with many of the most learned men of his day. His circle of friends included such men as Archbishops Ussher and Sheldon, as Bishops Morley of Winchester, Ward of Sarum, King of Chichester, and Sanderson of Lincoln; as Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton, Dr. Donne, the famous Dean of St. Paul's, Fuller the historian, the 'ever memorable' Hales, Dr. Hammond, and William Chillingworth.

It is therefore all the more disappointing that a man of so many

and distinguished friendships, who himself recorded with considerable detail the lives of no fewer than five of his contemporaries, should have left so little record of his own career. The details of Walton's life, especially of certain periods of it, are exceedingly meagre. Though he lived 'full ninety years and past,' the story of the greater portion of his life is an almost total blank. For purposes of convenience we may be allowed to divide his long life into four periods—his early life up to the time of his residence in London; the business period of twenty years, during which he lived in Fleet Street, at the corner of Chancery Lane; the period of his second marriage, marked by the publication of *The Compleat Angler*; and the period of his old age, from the death of his second wife in 1662, when Walton was seventy, to his own death twenty years later. We may briefly glance, by way of leading up to the special purpose of this paper, at these successive periods of his life.

He was born at Stafford on August 9, 1593, and baptized in St. Mary's Church on the 21st of the following month, when he received the name of 'Izaak,' perhaps, as Dean Stanley suggested, after the learned Isaac Casaubon, who appears to have been a friend of the family. Of his childhood and youth nothing whatever is known. In 1613, when he was twenty years of age, there appeared a poem, *The Love of Amos and Laura*, which is dedicated by the writer 'To my approved and much respected friend, Iz. Wa.,' which seems to indicate that his mind was already drawn towards literature. From 1624 to 1644 he resided in Fleet Street, where he appears to have carried on business as a 'sempster' or linendraper. Here he became intimate with Dr. Donne, who was rector of the parish, and who introduced Walton to many distinguished men. His twenty years' residence at St. Dunstan's was marked by many a sorrow, including the death of his first wife, who was a descendant of Archbishop Cranmer, of both his children, and of his intimate friends Wotton and Donne. To this period belongs the publication of his first work, of which Hales of Eton is reported to have said that 'he had not seen a Life written with more advantage to the subject, or more reputation to the writer, than that of Dr. Donne.'

In 1644, at the age of fifty, Walton retired from business, and deeming London 'a dangerous place for honest men to live in,' returned, it seems, at any rate for a time, to his native town of Stafford. It is difficult, however, to trace with any certainty his movements during this the third period of his life. In 1646 he married his second wife, Anne Ken, half-sister to Thomas Ken,

afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells, and this happy union doubtless brought him into still closer connection with the ecclesiastical world. A few years later appeared his *Life of Sir Henry Wotton*, followed in 1653 by *The Compleat Angler*, the work by which he is now most generally known. During this period we may think of him as residing for a time at Stafford, and afterwards, it appears, at Clerkenwell; as spending his time partly in literary work and partly in fishing, sometimes with his friend, Charles Cotton, in Dovedale; and as visiting his numerous friends in various parts of the country. In 1662, probably when on a visit to Bishop Morley, who had recently been appointed to Worcester, the great calamity of Walton's life occurred. His second wife died, leaving him a widower at the age of seventy, with two children—Anne, aged fifteen, who was to be the stay and comfort of his old age, and Izaak, aged eleven, afterwards Rector of Poulshot, in Wiltshire, and Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. She was buried in the Lady Chapel of Worcester Cathedral, and her epitaph, written by Walton, speaks of her as being ‘A woman of remarkable prudence and primitive piety, her great and general knowledge being adorned with such true humility, and blest with so much Christian meekness, as made her worthy of a more memorable monument.’

We now come to what we have ventured to call the fourth or last period of Walton's life, and of this period, especially of the last seven years of it, little beyond conjecture, more or less probable, is to be found in his biographies; and even Mr. Stapleton Martin, the latest of his eulogists, has no fresh light whatever to throw upon it. It is usually supposed that the old man spent most of his time with Bishop Morley at Farnham or Winchester, and the belief seems to be based on a statement by Dr. Zouch that ‘Walton and his daughter had apartments constantly reserved for them in the houses of Dr. Morley, the Bishop of Winchester, and of Dr. Ward, Bishop of Salisbury.’ This assertion need not be disputed; there can be little doubt that after the death of his wife in 1662 the aged fisherman and his youthful daughter frequently visited their friends, especially Bishop Morley at Farnham Castle, where he wrote his ‘Lives’ of ‘Mr. Richard Hooker’ and of ‘Mr. George Herbert,’ and Bishop Ward at Sarum, and doubtless Charles Cotton, on the banks of the Dove. But in the year 1676, when Izaak Walton had attained the great age of eighty-three, his daughter Anne, the inseparable companion and comfort of his old age, was married to Dr. William Hawkins, usually described as a Prebendary of Winchester Cathedral. Now, this event cannot but have greatly

influenced the conditions and surroundings of the old man's life, which had still some seven years to run. But of these seven years his biographers have nothing to tell us. His last visit to Charles Cotton seems to have taken place in the year of his daughter's marriage, probably in her company shortly before the ceremony took place. He was now becoming too old for his beloved occupation of fishing, except in fine weather; and the fatigues of travelling were great in those days. The only event of any importance which breaks the silence of those seven years was the publication of his *Life of Dr. Robert Sanderson*, which appeared in 1678, and was dedicated to his old friend Bishop Morley of Winchester; but there is nothing to show where the book was written. In the concluding paragraph of the 'Life' the aged author says: 'Tis now too late to wish that my life may be like his, for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age: but I humbly beseech Almighty God that my death may; and do as earnestly beg of every Reader to say, Amen.' Even of his death no particulars remain. We only know that he passed away on December 15, 1683, during the great frost of that year, at the house of his son-in-law, Dr. Hawkins, in the Close at Winchester.

But it has long seemed to the writer that with regard to these closing years of Walton's life sufficient use has not been made by his biographers of the details contained in his will. This most interesting document, well known to all his admirers, was begun by the old man on his birthday, a few months before his death, 'being,' he says, 'in the ninetyeth year of my age, and in perfect memory, for which praised be God.' Now, the respect and affection with which, in his will, Walton speaks of Dr. Hawkins, 'whom,' he says, 'I love as my own son,' is most noticeable, and lends some support to the contention of the writer that these last years were spent, not, as is usually supposed, in the houses of various friends, but under the loving care of his daughter and son-in-law, in whose house at Winchester, as we have seen, he eventually died. And this surmise, which is obviously the natural one, is not without confirmation in other directions. The passage in his will will be remembered—'I also give unto my daughter all my books at Winchester and Droxford, and whatever in those two places are or I can call mine. To my son Izaak I give all my books at Farnham Castell, and a deske of prints and pictures, also a cabinett near my bed's head, in which are some little things that he will value, though of no great worth.' It is evident from this passage that Izaak Walton in his last years had some close connection; not

only with Farnham and Winchester, but also with Droxford, a village in the Meon Valley some fourteen miles from the cathedral city. At Farnham, it is clear, he still had his own chamber in the Castle, where he had written the 'Lives' of Hooker and of Herbert, and where he was always sure of a warm welcome from his old friend of forty years' standing. At Winchester there was the Canon's house in the venerable Close, near to the one occupied by Dr. Ken, at that time a Prebend of the cathedral, where he lived peacefully with his daughter and Dr. Hawkins, and not, as his biographers have imagined, with Bishop Morley, for Wolvesey Palace, on the building of which the good bishop was engaged, was not finished at the time of Walton's death. But what was his connection with Droxford? To discover this connection at once became the object of the writer when he was appointed Rector of Droxford two years ago. From the ordinary sources of information he could learn nothing. The biographers of Izaak Walton, so far as he is aware, pass over this mention of Droxford in almost total silence. Even Mr. Stapleton Martin makes no reference to it. The word 'Droxford' does not so much as occur in his index. Sir Harris Nicolas does indeed suggest that perhaps Walton had a house or apartments in the village, which from the passage already quoted in the will is abundantly evident. Mr. Dewar, in his Winchester edition of *The Compleat Angler*, is the first to hint at the true solution, although he admits that he had 'not succeeded in finding out anything about Walton at Droxford.' He states, however, that Dr. Hawkins, besides being Prebendary of Winchester, was also Rector of Droxford. The writer had already met with this bare statement in Bowles's *Life of Bishop Ken*, published about the year 1830, but had entirely failed to substantiate it. Repeated searches in the episcopal register, alike at Winchester and at the Record Office, produced no evidence that William Hawkins was ever Rector of Droxford. The matter, however, was happily set at rest, only a few weeks ago, by the writer's discovery in one of the Composition Books at the Record Office of the entry of the payments made by 'William Hawkins, S.T.P., in November 1664,' on his institution to the living. He followed, it appears, one Dr. Nicholas Preston, who had been deprived during the time of the Commonwealth, but had been restored to his rights on the accession of Charles II., and died in September 1664. The living of Droxford Dr. Hawkins continued to hold, in conjunction with his canonry, to which he had been appointed two years previously, until the time of his death, which occurred in 1691. The

fact, then, now fully established, of his son-in-law holding preferment at Droxford as well as at Winchester may be taken as the undoubted explanation of the connection of those two places in the will of Izaak Walton. With the exception of an occasional visit to Farnham, he passed his closing years—

serene and bright,
And calm as is a Lapland night,

in the loving care of his daughter and her husband, sometimes in the Close at Winchester, and sometimes in the rambling old rectory on the banks of the Meon stream.

And that these visits to Droxford were of more than a mere passing nature may be inferred, not only from the way in which he speaks of his library and belongings, but also from the fact, lately discovered by the writer, that he had more than one intimate friend among the residents there. His books, as already has been noticed, Walton divided between his son and daughter, mentioning, however, one or two volumes for which evidently he had a personal affection. Thus to Dr. Hawkins he gives *Dr. Donne's Sermons*, which, he adds, 'I have heard preacht and read with much content.' To his son Izaak he gives Dr. Sibbs his *Soul's Conflict*, and to his daughter *The Bruised Reed*, 'desiring them to read them so as to be well acquainted with them.' One other individual shares with his children this special mark of Walton's esteem. 'I give,' we read, 'to Mr. John Darbyshire the *Sermons* of Mr. Anthony Farrington or of Dr. Sanderson, which my executor thinks fit.' Moreover, among the friends mentioned in his will, to whom Walton bequeaths a ring, with the motto 'A friend's farewell. I. W., obiit,' we also find the name of 'Mr. John Darbyshire.' The identity, therefore, of this individual, for whom Walton evidently had a great regard, becomes a question of distinct interest as throwing light on the friendships of his last years; so that the feeling of satisfaction which the writer experienced when he discovered that 'Mr. John Darbyshire' was Dr. Hawkins's curate at Droxford will easily be imagined. He was evidently a person of some position, for though at Droxford he was only curate, yet after the manner of the age he held preferment elsewhere, and at his death was buried within the walls of Droxford church. From a mural tablet in the north chapel of the church, to the memory of his first wife, who died the year before his aged friend, we learn that 'Mr. John Darbyshire was Rector of Portland and Curate of Droxford.' At Droxford, as is clear from the registers, he entirely

resided, and the chief events in his family history were connected with the place. Walton, we may be sure, regularly attended his ministrations in the parish church, and took a deep interest in his personal affairs, which had been darkened, as the burial register reveals, by much sorrow. It must therefore have been with feelings of pleasure that, a few weeks before his death, the aged fisherman heard of his friend's second marriage in Droxford church to 'Mrs. Frances Uvedale,' youngest daughter of Sir Richard Uvedale, Kt., whose family, from the time of William of Wykeham, had exercised a wide influence in the Meon Valley.

Among the other friends mentioned in his will to whom Walton leaves a ring as 'a friend's farewell' will also be noticed the name of 'Mr. Francis Morley.' He too, the writer has discovered, was a resident of Droxford, and lies buried in a vault in the north-west corner of Droxford church, beneath the floor of the baptistery. The Jacobean manor-house in which he lived, with its quaint gables and legends of secret passages, is still standing over against the rectory, and the gateway in the massive red-brick garden-wall still opens into the churchyard, through which 'old Izaak' and his comparatively youthful friend must have often passed together. Francis Morley, as we learn from his marble tablet in the church, was a nephew of the Bishop of Winchester, and this fact doubtless deepened the intimacy between the two men. He was also a warm friend of Thomas Ken, and when, two years after Walton's death, Ken was made Bishop of Bath and Wells, Francis Morley supplied him with the necessary cash in hand to meet the expenses of his consecration. A most interesting relic of this Droxford friend of our 'honest fisherman' is still preserved in the rectory garden. In the middle of the undulating lawn, near the lofty tulip-tree, at the moment of writing covered with thousands of exquisite blossoms, there stands a stone sundial, of stately proportions and design, on which are carved, one on each side, two heraldic devices. The one coat-of-arms represents the armorial bearings of the Morley family impaled with those of the Tancred; and the other the Morley arms impaled with those of the Herberts. The dial, then, it is clear, commemorates the marriages of father and son—of Walton's friend, Francis Morley, with Jane Tancred, which took place in the year 1652; and of Francis Morley's eldest son, Charles, who married Magdalene, daughter of Sir Henry Herbert and niece of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. The exact date of this latter marriage the writer has been unable to discover; but inasmuch as Charles Morley died in 1697 at the age of forty-five, and Magdalene in 1737

at the age of eighty-two—they are both buried in Droxford church—they would have been respectively thirty-one and twenty-eight at the time of Walton's death. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that they were married before that event took place; and if so it is permissible to believe that the family sundial was erected in the lifetime, perhaps at the instigation, of the old fisherman. It would at any rate be a memorial such as would heartily have commended itself to his mind.

The old rectory is still standing, although somewhat enlarged since the days of Izaak Walton. Part of it, however, remains in exactly the same condition as in the closing years of the seventeenth century. The floors are still boarded with wide planks of oak, and the leaden lattice casements remain. One or two rooms facing south, for the old man was nearing ninety and doubtless felt the cold mists arising from the river, may not unnaturally be associated with our friend. On the walls would hang one or two 'prints and pictures,' which recalled happy memories of bygone days. There he would keep his books, at any rate some of his favourites, such as *Dr. Donne's Sermons*, or *The Returning Backslider*, by Dr. Sibbs (now in the Cathedral Library at Salisbury), or the works of 'holy Mr. Herbert' or of Dr. Sanderson. A copy of *The Compleat Angler*, doubtless of the first edition, was, we may be sure, upon the shelves, and a collected edition of the 'Lives.' Perhaps in a corner of the room stood his fishing-rod and tackle, for though age prevented him from visiting his friend Cotton in Dovedale, yet in fine weather he would stroll down the glebe meadows where the bee-orchis grows and try his hand at 'catching trouts' in 'the swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brook' of the Meon. Sometimes in cold weather, when the elements kept the old man indoors, Mr. John Darbyshire or Squire Morley would come over to the rectory for a chat by the fireside. Walton would relate to his friends many anecdotes of the great Churchmen he had known in former years, of Sir Henry Wotton, and Hales, and Chillingworth. He would tell, in tones of awe, of 'the dreadful vision' which once appeared to Dr. Donne; or he would show the gold signet ring his friend had left him, and with which he afterwards signed his will, in which was set a blood stone with the figure of the Crucified, not on the cross, but on an anchor, as the emblem of hope; or, in a lighter vein, he would tell of the pleasant days long gone by when he 'had laid aside business, and gone a-fishing with honest Nat and R. Roe'; or perhaps he would play a 'game at shovel-board' with his friends. Mr. John Darbyshire, on his part, would have

much to tell of the way in which, a few years before he came, the quiet village of Droxford was affected by the great rebellion. He would repeat the story learnt from the parishioners, how 'the learned Dr. Preston,' 'for his eminent loyalty,' had been shamefully entreated; how the Prayer Book for ten years had been silenced; how grievously the Church had suffered from the iconoclasm of the age. He would not forget to speak of the stately altar tomb which for four centuries had stood in the south chapel to the memory of the mother of John de Drokenford, who became Bishop of Bath and Wells and Chancellor of England in the troubled days of Edward II., and which had been utterly destroyed, and her monumental effigy of Purbeck marble thrust out of the church, and buried somewhere in the meadows below. Then he would tell of the return of 'the beloved minister,' and how he set himself to repair the mischief which had been wrought, panelling the sanctuary with oak, and fencing it off with stately altar-rails. These Jacobean altar-rails have lately been restored to the church, and it is pleasant to think that the aged author of *The Compleat Angler* must have often leaned against them when he received the Holy Communion from the hands of Dr. Hawkins or Mr. John Darbyshire.

Thus the days of the old man at Droxford would pass quietly and uneventfully by. In the month of May he would listen to the 'sweet loud music' of the nightingale, which returns every year to the rectory garden. Or he would take 'a gentle walk to the river,' perhaps in company with his little granddaughter Anne, and point out to her 'the lilies and lady-smocks' in the glebe meadows. Beneath 'the cool shade of the honeysuckle hedge' he would rest awhile, and watch the moorhens in 'the gliding stream,' or listen to the notes of the sedge-warbler. The old mill is still standing, on the bridge of which the aged angler must have often lingered as he watched the rush of water making pleasant music beneath his feet. Indeed, the village is but little changed since the days, now over two hundred years ago, when Dr. Hawkins was rector and Mr. John Darbyshire looked after the spiritual welfare of the people, and Squire Morley presided at the parish meetings. The even tenour of life went quietly on, broken only now and again by some domestic affliction, or some family rejoicing, as when, it may be, in the presence of the rector and Mr. John Darbyshire, and of the revered and venerable fisherman, the Morley sundial was placed in position on the lawn.

JOHN VAUGHAN.

Mim.

EVERYBODY in Aasklip called her Mim, and she answered to the name as a matter of course, but Wilhilmina she had been christened, and Wilhilmina Meiring she wrote herself, with many sprawls and flourishes, on the rare occasions when she put pen to paper. Her father, Oom Dantje, the lean old man who had worn the same hard black hat with the dent in the crown, and the same scarf round his neck for more years than anyone in Aasklip could count, and who, by reason of being the principal landlord, was a person of importance in the village, was nevertheless not so much of a power in it as was his daughter Mim. She, big, broad-shouldered, and strong as a man, with an active mind, a ready tongue, and a boundless faith in herself, queened it royally over her Dutch neighbours, as well as over the coloured fisher-folk who formed the greater part of the population of Aasklip. Yet, because a prophet is always without honour in his own country, the former were resentful, in their dull way, of her dominance of them, and whispered sourly of her among themselves; though none the less they spoke her fair and civilly when she came among them—which was often—because they, men and women alike, feared the sharpness of her tongue, and her muscular arm.

Aasklip, the fishing village, unmarked upon the map, unknown to quite four-fifths of the inhabitants of Cape Colony, but to Mim the most notable place on earth, was a thing of beauty in its way, with its broad white beach, its endless chain of sandhills, and its beautiful sheltered bay, on the opposite side of which a rock-crested mountain range stretched outwards, to end abruptly in Cape Hangklip, the 'Cape of the Hanging Stone.' Along the farther slope of a wide valley which lay beyond the sandhills, the dwellings of the Dutch people showed white among the close-growing clumps of bush; and down in its bottom, where the shallow vlei¹ had not encroached, the coloured folk had built their bush

¹ Lake.

pondoks,¹ and cultivated their garden patches. At the point where the road left the flatness of the veld and dropped down into the valley, stood the one general store the village boasted—a small, shed-like building, which was for ever pervaded by the odour of the salt and dried fish that was piled high in every corner, and hung in bunches along the rafters. And away beyond the valley rolled the vast, silent veld, with its mantle of sugar-bush and heather, and its barren, sun-scorched mountains.

Mim, the youngest of a large family, was born in a tumble-down old house, whose walls were all of a colour with the thick grey sand. Her mother died while she was still very young, her brothers and sisters all married and went away from Aasklip, and she was left at last, quite alone with her father, old Oom Dantje. As a child she had gone bare-footed through the sand to school in the little white school-chapel among the blue-gums, and there had learned to talk English fluently of the tired-looking widow who acted as schoolmistress, and who eked out her meagre salary by doing the village dressmaking. Mim passed her days much as the other villagers, white and coloured, passed theirs. She tended the vegetable garden that had been raised out of the sand in front of the old house she lived in, and kept its fence in repair. It was her work to milk the cows, and make cheese and butter, and, in the fruit season, great quantities of jam as well, which she afterwards stored away in the little dark room behind the kitchen, and dealt out sparingly. And she seldom failed, of an afternoon, to join the motley crowd that waited on the beach for the event of the day—the home-coming of the boats—and add her shrill voice to the bargaining over the writhing, silvery heaps that each craft, after it had been dragged high and dry upon the sand, cast down among them. The dwellers in Aasklip seldom ate meat. Fish, fresh, salted and dried, was the almost universal diet of the place, and it was cheap, save when the weather was bad, or the Jew dealers came and bought it by the cart-load, and took it away. Mim and her father usually ate fish too, for though Oom Dantje was well off, even wealthy, as wealth was reckoned in those parts, he carefully counted the pence that were spent, and kept a close hand on the purse-strings. His daughter, differently constituted as she was, never chafed against this idiosyncrasy of his. She accepted it as she accepted the sun by day and the moon by night, and the coming and going of the seasons, and the routine of her own life—as part of the universal

¹ Bush huts.

order of things. And with such she was perfectly content. Her ideas were necessarily vague, her ambitions few, and thus far no remarkable event had taken place to plumb any unsounded depths that might exist in her nature—unless the occasional visits of young Piet Botha might be termed such. The latter was a prosperous farmer, who owned the best fruit-farm in the district and the best horses, and a fine big house as well, which his mother kept for him. Mim's neighbours commented among themselves on these visits, but nothing further had come of them as yet. Her birthdays slipped by with the same unchanging evenness till she was twenty-two, and then something happened.

'Have you heard,' the storekeeper said to her one morning, when she went in to barter some eggs for a new apron, 'that Van Dyk's cottage down on the beach is let?'

'No,' said Mim, interested at once. 'Who's taken it?'

'Some people from Capetown, Smit tells me,' the man replied. Mim was more interested still. People from Capetown seldom came to Aasklip.

'Does he know who they are?' she asked, sitting down on a sack of potatoes, and putting her elbows on the counter.

'No, he doesn't,' was the reply. 'He said all he heard was that some English people had taken the house for a short time, and that they were coming down in their own waggon.'

'English people!' commented Mim. They would be a novelty indeed, for the entire white population of Aasklip was Dutch. Even the inspector who paid yearly visits to the school was a Dutchman.

'I wonder when they'll come?' she remarked.

'To-morrow, likely,' said the man; 'but there's no saying. Town horses don't like country roads. You'll have to be looking out all day if you want to see them go through.'

Mim nodded. She would keep a lookout, certainly. That afternoon she looked with speculative interest at Van Dyk's cottage as she passed it on her way to the landing-place.

Away to the left, as one made one's way between the sand-hills to where the beach was flat and firm, a broken mass of rocks lay brown on the white sand, thrusting rugged arms out into the breakers; and perched among their harsh ridges, a little, red-roofed cottage stood facing the sea. Its aspect was quaint and picturesque, yet unutterably lonely too, for mountains of sand cut off the village, and no other dwelling was in sight. Nothing of green relieved the glaring whiteness of the sand or the blue of sea and sky. A sand-dune rose behind the cottage, and, but a step

from its front door, the great, tumbled, foam-streaked mass of the Atlantic roared ceaselessly.

And it was let at length, this lonely little cottage, after standing empty for more than two years. Mim watched the road all next day, but she did not see the arrival of the new tenants after all, for it was late at night when they finally reached Aasklip. Then, the storekeeper told her next morning, their horses were so tired that they refused to draw the waggon a step beyond his door, so the travellers had been obliged to hire his own team of oxen to take them over the sandhills to their destination. In answer to Mim's questioning, he said that the party apparently consisted of four—a young married couple, and a little boy and girl, who appeared to be the brother and sister of the young wife. 'No girl like herself, then,' Mim said, in a disappointed tone. She had so wanted to see an English girl. The storekeeper cast a casual look at her, and then drily remarked that he didn't think the young woman could be much older than she was herself—though he was no judge of such matters, and didn't pretend to be. As to the appearance of any of the newcomers he could not satisfy Mim at all, so she presently left him in peace, and made up her mind to go on a voyage of discovery herself.

But her sense of the fitness of things obliged her to allow three days to elapse after their arrival before she went to call upon them; during which time nothing was seen of the strangers in the village. When the afternoon she had fixed upon for her visit came, she dressed herself with care, donning her best black dress, a clean apron, and a great frilled kappie, and putting new leather laces into her veldschoen. No feeling of shyness or diffidence assailed her when at length, after a contented survey of herself in the looking-glass, she started out. Insatiable curiosity, and the assurance of the profoundly ignorant, enveloped her as a garment, and made her quite impervious to such sensations.

And she was provided with a plausible excuse for her visit too. Was not her father, on occasion, the butcher of the hamlet, and at that very moment did not a sheep, killed and dressed, hang from the branch of a tree inside their garden fence? The two legs of mutton had been sold already, but that was a fact which weighed but lightly with Mim. She would sell one of them again to the English strangers, if they should happen to want one—or, at any rate, that, she was prepared to explain, was the object of her coming.

The sea was calm on that warm afternoon, and the waves rose

and broke over the rocks with a heavy, lazy motion. A haze hung about the mountains on the other side of the bay, and far away the fishing-boats could be seen, making their way homewards, mere specks on the glittering expanse of blue. But Mim had no eyes for them this afternoon. Her regards were fixed on the little verandah which ran across the front of the cottage, and on which, as she drew near, she could see a lady sitting. A narrow path wound in and out among the scattered rocks, and finally ended at the flight of rough stone steps that led up to the stoep. The lady rose as Mim approached these, and came forward to meet her.

'Good afternoon,' she said pleasantly. 'You have come over from the village?'

'Yes,' Mim responded readily, 'I came to see if you wouldn't like to buy some fresh meat, perhaps. We killed a sheep yesterday.'

'Some fresh meat? Yes, indeed we would. How kind of you to come all this way to let us know! We've been here three days, and have had nothing to eat but fish all the time. But sit down, won't you?' drawing forward the chair from which she had risen; 'you must be tired after your long walk. Yes, as I was saying, we have had nothing but fish for breakfast, dinner, and supper, and we're all beginning to get rather tired of it.'

Mim seated herself, her sharp little eyes very busy while the other was speaking. The Englishwoman might be even younger than herself, she was thinking (in point of fact she was older, but the cold and foggy north keeps the eyes bright and the skin fresh and clear long after youth has been worsted in a conflict with the hot climate of the south), and her face made Mim vaguely reminiscent of the monthly roses that climbed over one wall of the storekeeper's cottage—there was the same pink-and-whiteness about it, the same freshness and delicacy. The lady wore a broad-brimmed hat, but underneath it Mim could see a mass of hair so fair and shining that it seemed to her like nothing so much as Piet Botha's field of corn when the sun shone on it, though the fringes of the large blue eyes and the straight brows above them were dark even as Mim's own. But when the lady had brought another chair and seated herself beside her, and those blue eyes were looking into hers with a world of interest in them—the interest that is as far removed from curiosity as light from darkness—she found herself oddly tongue-tied. There was a brightness and sparkle about the other which, added to her unlikeness to anyone Mim had ever seen before, momentarily disconcerted her. But

only momentarily, for with the lady's next remark her assurance returned.

'You live here in Aasklip, of course?' the latter said.

'Yes, I live here,' Mim replied. 'I've always lived here. Have you come to stay long?' she asked in her turn, for her object was to find out things.

'Oh, dear, no—only for a fortnight or three weeks at the most. I think a fortnight will be quite enough for me. Don't you find this place dreadfully dull sometimes?' compassionately.

'Dull!' echoed Mim, with a stare. 'I'm not dull. I've always got lots to do. You came from Capetown, didn't you?'

'Yes, and we drove all the way—just fancy. Nearly a hundred miles, isn't it? We could have come by train as far as Sir Lowry's Pass, of course, but we thought it would be such fun coming in the waggon. And so it was, in a way, though the roads were awful. When will you South Africans learn how to make proper roads?'

Mim disregarded the question. The roads did not interest her.

'Is that your husband who came with you?' she pursued. The lady's manner chilled at once.

'Yes,' she replied distantly, and said no more. But Mim proceeded, unnoticing:

'The rest of your people, do they live in Capetown?'

Her companion's countenance was still grave, but within herself the latter was thinking of some advice laughingly given her by a Colonial friend before she left Capetown. 'If you come in contact with any of the Dutch folk down there in the wilds,' the friend in question had said, 'you must not be offended with them if they at once put you through a catechism as to your past, present, and future. It's only their way of making conversation with a stranger, just as we discuss the weather or politics, and there's nothing rude or ill-mannered about it in their eyes. You'll find them just as ready to answer such questions as they are to ask them.'

With this recollection in her mind, Mim's hostess cast a look at the Dutch girl's stolid countenance, and her rising resentment sank. Her bright, friendly manner came back to her.

'No,' she answered, 'the rest of my family are in England. I myself have only been a short time in this country, but my husband's people live in Capetown. His brother and sister are down here with us.'

'Oh, are they his?' said Mim. 'The man that keeps the shop

said he thought they were yours.' She smoothed down her apron, and then asked another question :

'Have you been married long ?'

'Nearly a year,' briefly, for national characteristics are strong, in spite of disinterested advice.

'Shall you go back to Capetown when you leave here ?' Mim went on relentlessly.

'I think so. Oh, yes, it's most likely that we shall. We have only come for a short holiday, and someone who knew this place told my husband he would get good boating and fishing here. But come, now, since you are kind enough to come and see me, you might tell me something about Aasklip, and how you manage to pass your time every day. I am new to this country, you see, and everything interests me.'

Mim stared at her again, and made no reply. The question nonplussed her, and she looked sulky. She understood well enough what the Englishwoman meant, but it was a subject she was unused to discussing, and she was not an adaptable sort of person. Fortunately, however, her companion was of the considerate and tactful order, and perceiving at once the effect her words had taken, she set herself to re-awaken the girl's interest by making her remarks more personal.

'I suppose,' she said, 'that all *your* people are here in Aasklip ? Your father, and mother, and brothers and sisters, I mean.'

Mim's face cleared. She found her level again.

'I live with my father,' she replied. 'My mother died long ago, and all my brothers and sisters are married and away. Our house is close by the shop. You know the shop, perhaps ?'

The blue eyes looked vague.

'No, I'm afraid I don't. I haven't been across to the village yet, you see, and when we arrived it was dark, and we couldn't see anything.'

An idea leapt into Mim's mind as the other spoke. 'I'll take you over one day, if you like to go,' she said, with a burst of confidence. She knew all Aasklip was agog with curiosity concerning these strangers, and recognised at once what a triumph hers would be if she became the means of gratifying it. The prospect was alluring. 'I'll take you over,' she said, and waited with visible anxiety for the answer.

'Will you really ?' said the lady. 'That is very kind of you. I'm sure I should like it very much.'

'And when would you like to go ?' pursued Mim. 'To-morrow ?'

'If you like. Any day will suit me, because I don't go out with the others much. They are off in the boat, or fishing from the rocks all day, but I really can't do it. I'm not so sublimely indifferent to the sun as they are.'

'To-morrow afternoon, then,' said Mim. 'And I'll come over and fetch you,' she added.

'Thank you, that is kind. Is the walk over the sandhills very terrible?' whimsically puckering up her face.

'Terrible! Why, it's nothing,' said Mim, opening her eyes. 'Only you ought to wear shoes like these,' she added, thrusting out her veldschoen-clad feet, and glancing distrustfully at the white canvas shoes of the English lady. The latter regarded Mim's footwear with something very like dismay.

'Like those! Yes, I suppose they are strong, and they keep out the sand,' she said doubtfully. 'But aren't they very heavy?'

'Not a bit,' Mim answered stoutly. Then she looked again at the little white shoes, and added concedingly, 'Well, perhaps you might find them heavy after wearing those. How much did you pay for them, now?'

'Eight-and-sixpence,' very distantly.

'*Magtig!* Eight-and-sixpence for those! Why, mine you can get for three-and-six, and there are some pairs in the shop that only cost half-a-crown and two shillings. But things are very dear in Capetown, aren't they?'

'I don't think so—not particularly.'

'Sometimes we send to Capetown for things,' Mim continued. 'The post cart brings them out. I got a nice hat last month, one something like yours, only it's got a red bow at the side. What did you pay for that one?'

'I really forget. I got it in England. Well, Martha, what is it?' to a coloured girl who appeared in the doorway at that moment.

'Tea is ready, missis.'

'Oh, thank you, Martha,' with an audible sigh of relief. 'Come in and have some tea,' she added to Mim, and, rising, led the way into the room that opened on to the verandah.

The cottage had been taken furnished, after the idea of furnishing which obtained in those parts. This, the living-room, contained a deal table and six wooden chairs. Mim had been in it before, in the time of its last occupant, and she recognised the things; but now, somehow, their aspect was altogether different. A dark-green cloth covered the table, and a lamp hung over it from the central beam in the roof, and there were white lace blinds in the

little windows, and karosses on the floor. But the tea equipage attracted Mim's attention most. A pretty white embroidered cloth was spread at one end of the table, and on it stood two dainty cups and saucers, a tiny milk-jug and sugar-basin, and a great scarlet cosy, which, she presently discovered, concealed a brown teapot. The appearance of the latter seemed to call back the smiles which had momentarily vanished from the face of Mim's hostess, and she drew forward one of the wooden chairs and put the girl into it.

'I'm always glad I didn't exist before tea was discovered,' she said, as she seated herself behind the brown teapot. 'Just fancy never having any afternoon tea—nothing to drink but ale or wine. Mustn't it have been horrid?'

'We always drink coffee,' said Mim, accepting the cup handed to her. The pretty eyebrows went up.

'What—*never* tea?'

'Oh, sometimes, but we like coffee best. All Dutch people do,' said Mim, with the air of importance she always assumed when imparting information. The English lady smiled.

'Will you give me some when I come to see you?' she asked. Mim smiled too, and showed her strong white teeth.

'I'll be glad to,' she replied. 'And I'll show you how we make it too. To-morrow I've got nothing much to do, except in the morning, when I must make bread. But yesterday, *mijn tijdjes*! I was busy.'

'Were you?' with polite interest.

'Yes,' smoothing her apron. 'But I always am, the days I've got a sheep to kill. It's only about once a month, though—'

'A sheep to kill! But who kills it?'

'I do,' Mim answered simply. The lady's spoon fell into her saucer with a clatter. She stared at her visitor with wide-open horrified eyes.

'You kill the sheep! You!'

'I always do,' said Mim, with pride. 'I only had to watch a little at first, and I soon learned how to do it. You see, you just—'

'Oh, please *don't*,' the white hands went up in sharp protest, and the lady shuddered. Mim looked puzzled for a moment. Then she laughed.

'Are you frightened of such things?' she said. 'That's funny. I knew a girl once—she used to live here in Aasklip once, but she's been gone away a long time now—and she was so frightened that

she always ran away when the sheep was brought in to be killed. Once,' chuckling, 'we caught her, and my sister held her fast, and made her look. *Magtig!* how she screamed! She was quite silly for a long time afterwards.'

Without replying to this, the lady rose and went to the door, leaving her tea half-drunk. Mim looked at her for a moment, then emptied her cup at a gulp, and rose and went to her side, her big, ungainly form towering head and shoulders above the other. But, with almost a start, the Englishwoman moved away from her, and went out on the stoep. Mim followed. A light breeze had sprung up, and blew in their faces, but the dark specks had vanished from the surface of the sea. The boats were home.

'There'll be lots of fish to-day,' Mim remarked, 'the sea's so quiet. Who do you get your fish from?' she added.

'I don't know. Martha gets it.'

Mim shot a sidelong glance at the speaker. There was a curious change in the fair face, and the blue eyes did not seek hers as they had done before, but looked out over the sea with something in them that she could not fathom. A short silence followed, and then Mim had an inspiration.

'I'll bring you a pair of veldschoen from the shop to-morrow,' she said. 'You'll find them much better than those white things for walking through the sand.'

'Thank you, no,' came the answer, cold and quiet, but decisive. 'And I will not trouble you to come at all to-morrow, as I have changed my mind about going. It is exceedingly kind of you, but I would rather not.'

'Not go!' echoed Mim in astonishment. 'But you said you wanted to.'

'I have changed my mind,' in the same decided tones. 'And never mind about the mutton either. We can do quite well without it.' Then, turning her face more in Mim's direction, she added, 'It's getting rather late, don't you think?'

'But why don't you want to go?' demanded Mim, ignoring the question. This revision of the plan did not please her at all, and signs of her disapproval began to appear in her countenance. Her lips tightened, her little eyes gleamed. To be thwarted in anything on which she had set her mind was a new and unpleasant experience for the village autocrat. But the lady seemed quite undisturbed by her evident displeasure, and did not even answer her question.

'I really think,' she said in level tones that fell like a cold

douche on Mim's rising temper, 'that, as the sun has gone down, you had better not run the risk of having to cross those sand-hills after dark, especially as you are alone. Be careful of those steps.' Mim involuntarily moved towards them, though she had not the faintest intention of going just then, 'they're so steep, and one is very apt to slip on them. Good evening,' she added, and with a sudden movement stepped again into the doorway. Mim faced round, but, with a nod as decided as her tones had been, the lady closed the door upon herself, and Mim was left with no alternative but to take her departure.

Later on, in that same room of the cottage, an indignant young woman was pouring the story of the afternoon into her husband's ears.

'And I was so nice to her, too, till I heard *that*,' she ended disgustedly. 'Think of it, Jack, only think of it—a girl killing a *sheep*, and quite as a matter of course, too. That was the horrid part of it. What a mind, what a nature she must have, to be able to do such a thing! Ugh!' And the speaker shuddered.

But Jack roared with laughter.

'My dear little woman,' he said, when he had recovered his gravity, 'you were altogether too hard upon her, I think. You must remember that your ways are not her ways, and I daresay some things Englishwomen do would horrify your friend quite as much as she horrified you this afternoon.'

'Now, Jack, *what* things? Just tell me some.'

Jack rubbed his forehead, and looked this way and that. His wife pointed a triumphant finger at him, and then they both laughed.

'But, in my humble opinion,' he said, 'the very fact that she took it as a matter of course is her excuse. She didn't see anything revolting in it, and would never understand your feelings.'

'Perhaps not. But I'm not going out with her, Jack, for all that. Every time I looked at her hands I should shiver.'

Meanwhile, Mim had gone trudging homewards over the sand-hills that evening, possessed by feelings to which she had hitherto been a complete stranger. Doubt, depression, resentment, and a galling sense of defeat, all these unenviable sensations held possession of her mind, and held it so well that, in passing through the village, she never noticed Piet Botha's smart new cart standing outspanned by the store. Reaching home, she set about getting supper in the same preoccupied way, and she and Oom Dantje ate it almost in silence. She did not tell her father where she had been that afternoon, because she knew it would entail answering many

questions, and she felt indisposed to satisfy him just then. When the meal was over, Oom Dantje lit his pipe, and, putting on his hat, set off to the store for his evening gossip. Mim cleared the table, washed up the things and put them away, and then, instead of joining her father at the store, as her custom was, she went into the garden, and sat herself down on a box under the tree from which the carcase of the sheep was hanging. It was a clear, cool evening, and the stars were beginning to twinkle through the deepening dusk. Mim stared upwards, but she was not looking at them. A bat skimmed past, close to her cheek, but she never stirred. She was still brooding over the rebuff she had sustained that afternoon, and the more she turned it over in her mind the deeper grew her sense of injury.

Why had the Englishwoman refused to go out with her, after first promising to do so; and *why* had she been so friendly at the beginning of their interview, and so very much the opposite at its close? This was the problem that Mim tried to solve, but she tried in vain. Her efforts ended at last in a fit of deep despondency, and sinking her head on her hands, she, for the first time in her life, fell utterly out of conceit with herself.

Always, till that moment, satisfied with her own personal appearance, she now mentally conjured up the woman she had been with that afternoon, and began to torture herself with odious comparisons. The fair and beautiful face of the stranger, her graceful form, her soft white hands, her little feet, the dress she wore, the dainty things about her, only served, in poor Mim's eyes, to bring into strong relief her own imperfections. Her mirror, when it reflected back her sallow face with its sharp eyes and turned-up nose and defiant little frizz of hair, and sent her away pleased with what she saw, lied and deceived her. Her father's friends, when they told her over their wine that she was a good-looking girl, lied and deceived her too. With the inconsistency of her sex, Mim had flown from one extreme to the other. She had fallen from the heights of self-satisfaction to the depths of self-abasement, and the fall was tremendous. The revelation of the afternoon had staggered her. And so she sat out in the darkness, with her face in her hands, and wept as she had never wept in her life before, and wished she had never been born.

At the store that evening Oom Dantje found Piet Botha sitting when he entered. A brief greeting passed between the two men, and then Piet inquired where Mim was. 'At the house,' said Mim's father. There was a little silence, and then they began to

discuss the war, that unfailing topic of conversation when men met together in those times. The storekeeper leaned over the counter and joined in, and the smoke of the strong tobacco in all three pipes rose thickly, and curled about the bunches of onions and dried fish that were hanging from the roof. At the end of an hour, Piet Botha rose, and, bidding the storekeeper good-night, went out.

He took the turn that led to Oom Dantje's dwelling, and strode rapidly along the narrow path that twisted in and out among the bushes. As he pushed open the little gate in the hedge that surrounded the house, a dark form rose suddenly close beside him, and he heard a faint exclamation. He stopped.

'Mim, is that you?'

'Piet.'

'Why do you sit here alone, Mim?' asked Piet, feeling in his coat-pocket for matches. 'Why didn't you come to the store with Oom Dantje? I was waiting for you.'

'I didn't know you were there,' Mim replied in a dull voice. 'Do you want to go into the house?'

But Piet had found his matches, and he struck one suddenly in her face. She threw up her hands to ward off the light, but not before he had seen that her eyes were red and swollen.

'Why, Mim,' he exclaimed, 'what's the matter? You've been crying!'

Whereat Mim at once sat down on the box from which she had risen and began to cry again. Piet stood by and listened to her unrestrained sobs in bewilderment. He tried expostulation and entreaty, but without effect, and then, at length, in desperation, he bent down and whispered in her ear the question he had come a long way that day to ask. Mim stopped crying then, and they whispered together long and earnestly. Afterwards, they fell to walking up and down the little garden path, and thus Oom Dantje found them when he came home from the store.

But it was not until some time the next day that Mim could be prevailed upon to tell the cause of her trouble of the night before. Then, to her astonishment, when she somewhat shamefacedly told the story of her visit to the cottage, Piet solved the problem for her at once. She entered into details, and he seized upon one with a shout of laughter.

'You told her *that*, Mim?' he cried. 'You told her you killed the sheep? *Magtig!* but what could you expect? These English-women, they will run and hide their eyes if one but wrings the neck

of a fowl. I know them, for did not one teach me in school for two years ?'

'And I thought it was because I was ugly and horrid,' Mim confessed. 'But, och, Piet, she is so pretty. Her hair is like gold, and it shines—it shines like the sea,' she ended, at a loss for a simile.

Piet fingered a bit of hers. 'This colour's nicer by far,' he said.

'And her eyes, Piet, they are, toch, so blue!'

'Brown for me,' Piet replied, and looked into her own.

'And her skin's so fair, and her cheeks are pink like roses, and her hands are so little and white——'

But Piet interrupted her here. He caught both hers in his, and laughed loud and long, and cried :

'Little and white they may be, and everything else that's pretty, but they couldn't kill a sheep, eh, Mim ?' And then Mim laughed too, as loud as he, and with her laughter the last shadow of yesterday's dark hour passed away.

CONSTANCE M. PROWSE.

The Beautiful Sheridans.

AT the east corner of Bolton Street (now 81 Piccadilly) there flourished, when the nineteenth century was still young, a club devoted to dandyism, *diners de luxe*, and high play, or, to speak cynically, the ruin of mind, body, and estate. It was called Watier's. Its presiding genius or 'perpetual president' was Beau Brummell, famous for his cravats, his quarrel with the Prince Regent, and his phenomenal good luck at the then fashionable game of macao. One evening he found the gaming-table so full that there was no room for him, but seated there was a friend of his whom he knew to be too poor to play for the extravagant stakes affected by the *habitués*, and who probably would not have been there at all but for the rosy influence of a good dinner with plenty of good wine. After a word or two the friends changed places, and before long Brummell rose the richer by 1500*l*. This sum he faithfully shared with his friend, saying, 'There, Tom, go home and give your wife and brats a supper, and play no more.' The action was kindly, and the advice good, and though the words lacked somewhat of respect, the pill was well gilded. Tom was the handsome, witty, spoiled son of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Of Tom it has been said that he was endowed with all the wit of his father, all the charm of his mother, and the good looks of both. Few men seem to have been more universally liked, and when George Colman wrote, 'I love and esteem Tom Sheridan heartily, and wish success to any scheme in which he is interested,' he only expressed a general sentiment.

A few specimens of Tom's wit have been preserved; none are better than a reply to his foolishly indulgent father when remonstrating with him for some imprudence. The father ended by saying, 'Why, Tom, my father would never have permitted me to do such a thing.' Whereupon Tom replied, in a tone of assumed indignation, 'Sir, would you dream of comparing your father to mine?' Another good one was his reply when told he had been

cut off with a shilling : ' You don't happen to have that shilling about you now, sir, do you ? '

By marrying Caroline Callendar, Tom brought more beauty and talent into the family, and associated it with the still more beautiful Fanny Callendar, who afterwards married Sir James Graham of Netherby. George IV., who might fairly be esteemed a connoisseur in such matters, declared this was the handsomest couple he had ever ' clapped his eyes on.'

Poor Tom Sheridan inherited more from his mother than her grace and charm. Elizabeth Linley, seraphic in voice, temper, and feature, described by a bishop as a link between women and angels, by Garrick as a saint, and compared by Macaulay to St. Cecilia, had been stricken down by a stealthy but ruthless attack of consumption, and the same fell disease assailed Tom in what should have been the flower of his manhood. A Government appointment was found for him at the Cape in the hope that the climate would arrest its progress. But all was vain ; he died in 1817, leaving his beautiful wife with seven beautiful children and poverty for their portion.

' You are one of the very few fellows in this world who can compare with me in the article of wives,' Tom Moore had written to Tom Sheridan, and Caroline Sheridan was not the woman to moan over the harshness of fate. To a small pension and apartments at Hampton Court Palace she added somewhat by novel-writing. One of her stories, *Carwell*, commended itself to Sydney Smith, who made it the occasion of a *bon mot*. The hero ends on the gallows, whereupon Sydney observed that though he had known the authoress was a Callendar, he had been unaware till then that she was a Newgate Calendar !

' Mamma is getting mouldy at Hampton Court,' wrote Lady Seymour in 1830 ; but ' old Mrs. Sheridan ' was still young and pretty when Disraeli made her acquaintance three years later. He found that she was his great admirer, and that the whole family had a ' very proper idea of his merits,' and, therefore, liked them all very much. She might well have become very mouldy indeed, for she had done her hard task well ; paid her husband's debts, educated her children, and established them in the world.

The ' brats ' were such as no mother could fail to be proud of. The eldest son—' dear Brinny ' of the Duchess of Somerset's letters—though ' well enough to look at and brother to three angels,' was not a very interesting person. Mrs. Norton said he was ' the only respectable one in the family,' and that it was due

to the liver-complaint. But his respectability did not prevent him copying his grandfather's matrimonial method. The lady of his choice was Marcia, daughter and heiress of Sir Colquhoun Grant. As the father objected to the ardent Brinsley, a trip to Gretna Green was arranged, and brought to pass when Sir Colquhoun went to Poole to contest an election. Sir Colquhoun returned in a great rage, shot his daughter's pet horse as the bridegroom was not at hand, and hurried off to his lawyer full of the idea of prosecuting the whole Sheridan family for conspiracy. But 'all's well that ends well.' Sir Colquhoun cooled down, found his son-in-law all that previously he had found him not, and, in the end, bequeathed him all his property. Thus with a seat at Frampton Court, a town house in Grosvenor Place, Brinsley became much more respectable and possibly more liverish. People said Mrs. Brinsley grew beautiful after her marriage, and that it was due to her connection with the Sheridans. Hayward, who shared in their hospitality, found them very happy in the society of such people as Lord Melbourne, Lord Powerscourt, Lord George Bentinck, Sir Edwin Landseer, and Albany Fonblanque—a very judicious mixture of blood and brains.

The other sons, all marked for early death, were—Thomas (died 1826), Frank (died 1843), and Charles (died 1847). They were all brilliant and witty, all handsome and tall, and all much beloved; but we only catch a few glimpses of them in the letters of their sisters and friends. Many must have felt, with Lord Dufferin, how great a pity it was that these bright creatures should have passed away leaving so few traces of their liveliness and wit.

In 1829 the Duke of Clarence gave a children's ball at Hampton Court to the little Queen of Portugal, stranded on our shores by the usurpation of Dom Miguel. The young Sheridans were there. 'The boys were in white ducks with lightish green jackets, with their hair curled; Charley had a magnificent worked collar to his shirt,' and had the honour of being once *vis-à-vis* with the young Queen, while Frank danced next her twice. 'Little Ghigo'—afterwards the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava—went in 'a crimson velvet frock frilled all round and a Grecian lace tucker.' His aunt Caroline (Mrs. Norton) had curled his hair with a hot fork, and he looked 'too beautiful.' Eighteen months later, when Aunt Georgy became Lady Seymour, little Ghigo again had his hair curled, and was 'excessively admired.' The beautiful sisters, their brothers Charley and Frank, and the aforesaid little Ghigo, all assisted at

the ceremony and made 'really a gorgeous spectacle, being all so handsome, you know.'

Charley and Frank spent pleasant times in the company of Mr. Edward Jesse, a courteous and dignified 'Gentleman of the Ewry,' of that old school which the world to its loss knows no more. His daughter has preserved a picture of those 'slim and beautiful lads,' making the old rooms merry with their boyish clatter, and priming the too credulous naturalist with wonderful dog-stories invented for his benefit, and received with courtly assents between pinches of Pontet's mixture; and of delightful river excursions by moonlight, the banks echoing with the glorious voices of the two boys as they sang their favourite duets. At intervals Jesse would tell dog-stories of his own with frequent recourse to Pontet; Mitford, of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, would cap him out of his own stores, and the boys would chaff them impartially on 'cat and dog platonic.' Charley's memory must have gone back to those happy dog days when Lord Seymour wrote of the death of his brother Algernon's dog: 'He intends having his skin made into shoes that he may have a memento of his faithful companion. Tell this to Charley that he may admire this instance of utilitarian romance. No foolish engraven tablet or sculptured urn to record the perpetuity of his canine attachment, but a pair of shoes, which, while they are new and pinch him, will naturally awaken the acuteness of his feelings, but as they grow old and easy must gradually soothe him into a calm resignation, and even reconcile him to the short-lived and short-tailed destiny of curs. What a sublime sentence! I should like to speak it to the electors of Totnes, if I could bring it in *à propos de bottes*!' It would almost appear that the Sheridan wit were as communicable as the Sheridan beauty.

These richly endowed lads grew in beauty, physique, and voice as became their descent, and none thought of the grim spectre that dogged their footsteps. When Frank went into 'long tails' his sisters introduced him to the gaieties of their own set, including Almack's, where he was found to be very handsome, and the ladies 'took great notice of him.' 'Uncle Graham'—that is, Sir James of Netherby—became First Lord of the Admiralty, and promised to make him 'a clerk or something' and bring him into the House, where he would learn self-dependence. Hayward was present at an hilarious Greenwich dinner given to Frank by Lord Normanby's Irish Staff, when the festivities ended by filling the pockets of a guest, who had found his way under the table, with a quart of ice-

cream. The Hon. Mrs. Ward used to tell of the charm of his society at Sorrento, where she listened delightedly to his stream of songs, stories, recitations, and impersonations flowing without stint all through the day. 'His lovely voice filled the air with sounds enchanting enough to bring out the sirens themselves.'

When Fanny Kemble was introduced to Charles she described him as younger brother to the Apollo Belvidere. Lord Dufferin remembered him at the British Embassy at Paris, surrounded by a great crowd of men and women seduced by the charms of his conversation to forsake the allurements of Terpsichore. Though his talk was full of pointed repartees, hardly any have been preserved—probably some have been given to better-known wits; but Mrs. Norton has saved one of the happiest. The De Ros card scandal was agitating society, and there were plenty of people willing to give the disgraced gambler a parting kick. He went into retirement, leaving his proxy with the Bishop of London 'in a very marked manner,' said a newspaper. A would-be wit observed, 'I am afraid to leave my card on him for fear he should mark it.' 'That would depend on whether he thought it a high honour,' said Charles very quietly—an admirable illustration of his wit and good feeling, by which we may judge of what we have lost.

When we hear wit
We attribute it
To Alvanley or Jekyll,

wrote Landor, and Charley's repartee was promptly given to Lord Alvanley.

Let us now turn to the 'sisters three'—Helen Selina, Mrs. Blackwood, afterwards Lady Dufferin, who died Lady Gifford; Caroline Elizabeth Sarah, who became the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and secondly Lady Stirling Maxwell; and Jane Georgiana, wife of Lord Seymour, who succeeded as twelfth Duke of Somerset. Their beauty was a universal theme. Fanny Kemble never saw such 'a bunch of beautiful creatures all growing on one stem'; to which Caroline replied complacently, 'Yes, we are rather good-looking people.' Lord Ronald Gower has told us of Disraeli sitting over the fire at Storey's Gate and murmuring, 'Dreams! Dreams! Dreams!' in an ecstasy over their beauty.

Each had her devotees. Caroline was indisputably the most talented, but the others were abundantly witty. Many gave the palm of beauty to Helen; twelve years after Dizzy's rapture, Georgy could write enthusiastically of the admiration Nelly had

won at Paris ; and Martha Somerville remembered her in Rome in widow's weeds beset by a great mob crowding to satisfy their admiration of *la bella monaca Inglese*. Dizzy liked her exceedingly—she was ‘very handsome and very Sheridanic,’ and, as he told his sister with the delicious vanity that characterised the young author and the future master of statecraft, she knew all his works by heart, and could ‘spout’ whole pages of *Vivian Grey*, *Contarini Fleming*, and the *Young Duke*. People were not taking him very seriously in those days, and the incense of a witty and beautiful woman ‘spouting’ his lucubrations could not fail to be gratifying. But Mrs. Blackwood, who was a woman of real discernment, easily detected the talent that lay beneath the affected eccentricity and dandyism, and there is no doubt that Disraeli's admiration was sincere. One day he appeared at the drawing-room at Storey's Gate in company with the paternal Dryasdust. He sat him down in a chair, looking at him ‘as if he were some object of vertu of which he wished to dispose,’ and said, ‘Mrs. Blackwood, I have brought you my father. I have been reconciled to my father on two conditions ; the first was that he should come and see you, the second that he should pay my debts.’

Though we hear more, perhaps, of Caroline's wit than of her beauty, she, too, had her votaries. This is Sir Henry Taylor's first impression of her : ‘I plunged deep into the acquaintance of Mrs. Norton and came to the top again dripping with beauty.’ She was strikingly like ‘old Brinsley,’ says Tom Moore, who went to see her at Almack's, when she was to dance as August in the quadrille of the Months, and found her the handsomest of any, although her competitors were all chosen beauties, and included ‘*La belle Forester ravissante*’ (afterwards the Countess of Bradford). Gibson said he had never seen a woman of such sculptural beauty as Mrs. Norton ; and Lord Houghton was equally ardent in admiration of her person and intellect.

‘Carry is the wit,’ said Mrs. Blackwood, and capital examples of her over-bubbling fun are to be found in her letters to Hayward. Here is a bit adverting to political incidents of the time :

But thou, sad Leech,
Hast got no speech !
Not even that one—surnamed the ‘Single’—
By which old Milnes made all ears tingle,
Nor that which was spoken by D'Israeli
(The abridgment of which was ‘Never say die !’)

When he told the M.P.'s who were coming it strong
 He'd be sure to make himself heard afore long ;
 And convinc'd me at least, when the row was past
 That he certainly would be heard at last.
 Nor a speech like Brougham's in the prime of his glory
 (As long and as sly as an 'Auld wife's story'),
 Which always sounded when it was done
 As if 'three single speeches were rolled into one,'
 Nor like Monckton Milnes, whose famous allusion
 Was carried through with so little confusion
 That the House could scarcely its laughter smother,
 As each wicked sentence begot another.
 Nor—but it's all my eye
 To expect a Leech to speak in reply.

Her wit was not only sparkling, it was often tactful, and perhaps never more so than in an adroit compliment to Tom Moore. He had escorted her to Hayter's, where she was sitting for her portrait, and having walked her across two parks, landed her at the studio in such a glow of beauty that the painter wished someone would do the same whenever she came to sit. On the way Moore told her that he always wrote in gardens or fields. 'One would guess that of your poetry,' she replied ; 'it quite smells of them.'

Around her gathered a goodly company of choice spirits of a quality difficult to surpass in any age. There were those dear old dowagers, the Misses Berry—Blackberry and Gooseberry the profane called them ; Samuel Rogers, sub-acid and caustic, with the anecdotes of half a century ; Henry Taylor, sober and solid, with a good thing always lurking in wait ; Brougham, vain and fussy, but excellent company, with a special vanity for beautiful women ; Lockhart, bubbling with joke and anecdote ; joyous Sydney Smith, thanking Almighty God that though He had made him poor He had made him merry ; Fanny Kemble, brilliant but somewhat too self-conscious ; Theodore Hook, often coarse, oftener malicious, but with a talent for improvisation that carried him everywhere ; Monckton Milnes, 'perpetual president of the Heaven and Hell Amalgamation Society' ; Abraham Hayward, giver of good dinners and sayer of good things ; Lord Westbury, 'Falstaff and Bacon rolled in one' ; Henry Reeve, whose fecund brain played so important, though unseen, a part in several administrations ; Disraeli, handsome, fashionable, witty, ambitious. Who is there to omit from this feast of reason, where the wit flowed so much more abundantly than the claret ?

Unfortunately Carry had married a man who did not understand the *bel esprit*, and his doubts and suspicions culminated in a charge of *crim. con.* against Lord Melbourne. The charge failed, and justly, according to general opinion. Jekyll, who rarely erred in credulity on such matters, wrote: 'No human being gave credit to the evidence. . . . The ass thought antlers would be ornamental to an animal of that species, but could not accomplish them, so will now have to pay the expenses of Lord Melbourne and his own.' Years after Serjeant Ballantine read the evidence and fully coincided with the verdict, which was endorsed, moreover, by Queen Victoria. Nevertheless, Mrs. Norton cannot be entirely acquitted of indiscretion. Lord Malmesbury thought she 'must consider herself very fortunate in being let off so easily,' and records that one old Tory 'couldn't see why Lord Melbourne should be so triumphant, as it had been proved that he had had more opportunities than any man ever had before, and had made no use of them!'

Some incidents in the Hon. George Norton's conduct were unworthy of a gentleman, and made bitter wounds in the feelings of his wife, as is sufficiently shown in her letter to Henry Taylor on his marriage: 'I hope you will be happy; there is no one, I believe, deserves happiness more; and I also hope, when you have power over the destiny of another, that you will remember that the most intelligent woman God ever made has something of the child in her disposition, and that the indulgence shown to children is as necessary in their case (if you mean either to be happy) as with an infant of three years old. Do not laugh at me for lecturing my betters. It is only when I think of some fresh and uncommenced destiny that I look gravely and sadly back at all the mistakes in my own.'

The general voice gave the palm of beauty to Georgiana the youngest of the Sheridan girls. 'Anything so splendid I never gazed upon,' wrote Disraeli; 'even the handsomest family in the world, which I think the Sheridans are, all looked dull. Clusters of the darkest hair, the most brilliant complexion, a contour of face perfectly ideal.' The seal was set on her claims when she was chosen Queen of Beauty at the Eglintoun Tournament of 1839.

Something of a lack of dignity was a characteristic of these ladies. Perhaps wit and dignity do not run well in harness. The year before the *cause célèbre*, and the day after the elopement of Brinsley, Caroline appeared at a party given by Sebastiani, the French Ambassador, talked in an extraordinary fashion, and kicked Lord Melbourne's hat over her head! The whole *Corps*

Diplomatique was amazed, says Lord Malmesbury, and we can easily understand it.

A comic incident in the affairs of Lady Seymour afforded society an interlude of fun early in 1840. She had written to Lady Shuckburgh for the character of a servant; Lady S. answered that she left such matters to her housekeeper, and that 'having a professed cook as well as a housekeeper in her establishment,' it was not likely she should know anything of servants' abilities. The ostentation of this ridiculous reply apparently tickled Lady Seymour out of the dignity that might be expected from a coming duchess; she wrote asking that the housekeeper might send the character, as her children could not remain without their dinner because Lady S. 'keeping a professed cook and housekeeper thought a knowledge of the details of her household beneath her notice. Lady Seymour understands from Stedman [the servant in question] that, in addition to her other talents, she is actually capable of dressing food for the little Shuckburghs to partake of.' Nor was this all; appended was a clever little sketch of the Shuckburgh children devouring mutton chops, Mary Stedman beaming upon them, and Lady Shuckburgh expressing lively symptoms of dismay! Lady S., however, had the last word, directing the housekeeper to say that she declined answering her note as 'its vulgarity was beneath contempt,' but as mutton chops only were required, 'Mary Stedman would be found equal to cook for or manage the establishment of the Queen of Beauty.' And with this last sniff ended the storm over a mutton chop.

Lady Seymour's life was free from the harsher worries that embittered her sister's. 'Your Georgy is going to be turned into a chaperone,' she wrote to 'darling Brinny' in 1830. 'Lord Seymour, the Duke of Somerset's son asked me yesterday to marry him, and I, being very civil and polite, said "Yes" . . . My acquaintances are rabid and frantic at my daring to do such a thing, and they turn round, after first congratulating Mamma, and say, "Good Heavens! is Lord Seymour mad? What a fool!" with other pleasing intimations of their good wishes towards me.' The would-be Benedick was shy, but not dilatory; in less than three weeks the wedding took place, 'Georgia was dressed in plain white satin with no ornaments but a diamond brooch and earrings, beautiful blonde seduisantes, and a magnificent blonde veil thrown over her head. I think I never saw anything so beautiful as she looked.' So wrote Mrs. Blackwood; the Sheridan girls had no spark of jealousy of one another's beauty. It was more than the

ordinary share of happiness that fell to Lady Seymour's lot, endowed with a keen sense of the ridiculous (one of Nature's kindest gifts), which filled the world with fun for her amusement; with a beauty that ensured her continual worship, and a husband who was a nobleman by nature as well as rank. Children, too, came to her offering their vials of joy and sorrow in either hand. 'I am glad the baby is like you,' wrote Lord Seymour to 'dearest Georgy,' 'if it will grow up like you I shall be more pleased with it than with a boy.' 'It' was Lady Ulrica Seymour who married Lord Henry Thynne. Boys also were granted her, but both died in the lifetime of their father. The death of the second son, Edward, was a blow from which the father never recovered, and the wound it made was deepened by the loss of his heir, Ferdinand. In the fulness of time came the last blow of all. On December 15, 1884, he wrote to Brinsley: 'Georgy came up to town on Friday, and seemed well—said the drive had done her good . . . but on Sunday morning she passed away in a quiet doze. She had suffered so much during the last eight months, and had nearly lost her sight, that it was for her a comfort, but to us a great loss, for she was always cheery and lively, even in the midst of her suffering.' To his nephew, Lord Dufferin, he wrote: 'It is a dreadful blank, after above fifty years of a most cheerful and affectionate companion. . . . At my time of life I cannot look forward to any long period.' His foreboding was justified; he survived her for one year only. In these last years her surpassing beauty had faded away, but her wit and charm remained to the end. She was the last of the famous trio. Helen had died in 1867. Her last years had been spent chiefly at Dufferin Lodge, Highgate, a pleasant villa adjoining Caen Wood. Caroline followed in 1876, after a very brief glimpse of happiness with her second husband, her levity toned down by sorrow, but her wit and spirit triumphing over all. She, too, had lost her beauty. 'I went to the play with Mrs. Norton,' wrote Sir Henry Taylor, 'which sounds gay, but it is as saddening a way of passing an evening as I can find. Her society is saddening to me in itself, so glorious a creature to look at even as she is—so transcendent formerly, and now so faded in beauty, so foundered in life.'

Art failed in its duty towards this lovely trio, and has given to posterity no portrait of any one of them even suggesting the loveliness which, by the unvarying testimony of the most critical, transcended the possibility of conveyance in words.

ALFRED BEAVER.

The Real Impressionist.

‘**I** UNDERSTAND,’ remarked Cynthia Trewen, ‘that he is an impressionist.’

She stood close to a cliff edge, where a steep slope of brilliant green turf, dotted with sea-pinks, made a sharp contrast with the shimmering blue of the summer sea beyond, which broke caressingly against the rocks beneath. The pink-studded green, the patch of red made by her tam-o’-shanter cap, and the white of her blouse, came near to causing the young man who was her companion to dilate upon colour values with a practical application.

‘My dear girl——’ he commenced incautiously.

Her lips drew together, and her black eyes met his in open wonderment as she interrupted.

‘Surely not! Mr. Searle,’ she corrected severely.

‘I apologise for the preface, Miss Cynthia,’ he responded, abasing himself. ‘But do you mind explaining what you mean by an impressionist?’

‘I am afraid I cannot,’ she laughed back, ‘for we are very ignorant of art at Penbarthy Barton. An impressionist, I think, mixes up colours, trusting to find ideas in the mess—that, at least appears to me to be very much the method of Mr. Delancy, there.’

She nodded over towards where, on a tiny plateau topping a jutting point a few hundred yards along the cliffs, a man stood in front of a huge field-easel.

‘Only,’ returned George Searle smilingly, ‘that kind of thing cannot be profitable.’

‘He gets his work away,’ answered the girl, with assurance. ‘He seldom has more than the picture he is working upon in the cottage, and I know that he sends off those he has finished almost at once—I have seen the cases in which he packs them on their way to the station. He must make a lot out of them, too, for he keeps a yacht in the creek down there.’

She pointed to where the topmast of a small craft showed over the rocks, but Searle was not impressed.

'That,' he responded drily, 'is rather a sign of spending than of making money. But perhaps you will introduce me—this Mr. Delancy is a friend of your father's, is he not?'

'And of mine,' she commented teasingly. 'Since he took the old cottage in spring he has got on very well with father, and often comes to the Barton to play chess with him. But he and I are friends also, so there need be no trouble about the introduction. Come along.'

She moved away by the narrow ribbon of path topping the cliffs; while Searle followed, speculating as to who this might be whom he was about to meet in such an out-of-the-way spot. He himself was a barrister—and incidentally something of an art critic in amateurish fashion—whom lack of briefs and the Long Vacation had brought to Cornwall upon a solitary walking tour. In its course he had put up at the 'Pig and Pilchards,' the inn of the remote fishing-hamlet of Polglin, where chance had made him acquainted with Mr. Trewen, of Penbarthy Barton, and where he had lingered on—ostensibly attracted by the cream and pasties of the 'Pig and Pilchards,' but fascinated, in reality, by Cynthia Trewen.

The path the pair traversed dipped to a hollow ere reaching the height upon which the painter was perched, so that he did not see their approach.

'Great Scot!' ejaculated Searle softly. 'Here is broken colour run mad!'

He had reason for surprise. Some sail showing upon the plain of ocean spread out before him had attracted the artist, who was ogling it through a pair of field-glasses; while his other hand kept a brush full of glossy black pressed uncertainly against the canvas upon the easel. A judicious little cough from Cynthia startled him, causing the pigment to splutter hopelessly.

'Oh, Mr. Delancy,' she cried, 'I am so sorry—I have made you spoil your work.'

He was short, dark, and broad-shouldered, with thin lips and small eyes, indicative of will-power and unscrupulousness. His age was about that of Searle—some five-and-twenty years; but he had the look of one who had lived every minute of it.

'On the contrary,' he answered with much plausibility, 'you have assisted me, Miss Cynthia, to precisely the effect I desired. I wished to create a semi-nocturne—a stretch of sea with the sun

sinking into a dark cloud. You have given me exactly the ragged, storm-driven cloud—the sun is simple.’

He placed a blur of ruddy crimson above the black blotch, and stood back admiringly. Admiration was beyond Cynthia, so she changed the subject.

‘This is a friend of ours,’ she said diffidently, ‘who desires to make your acquaintance. Mr. George Searle—Mr. Bertram Delancy.’

The men acknowledged the introduction; their glances crossing in a rapier-like salute. Searle thought the other must be crazy, for his work bore no more resemblance to a picture than a rag quilt does—being a mere chaotic assemblage of coloured patches thrown together against an indefinite outline, most crudely drawn. So the visitor determined to test his knowledge.

‘I see that you follow Manet, except in the use of black,’ he remarked, nodding towards the canvas. ‘Your notation has his breadth—I prefer its ease myself to the cramped touch of Pissarro.’

‘I am a slave to no school,’ responded the artist evasively, though he glanced keenly at the questioner. ‘You will favour my little place with a visit, now that you are here?’ he added, turning to Cynthia, with evident *empressement*.

‘I suppose I may,’ she returned gaily, ‘as conventionalities do not flourish about Penbarthy, and I should like Mr. Searle to see what is quite one of our few sights, if you will be so good as to show it to us.’

Delancy gathered up his materials, and led the way down the slope of the hill, which lay across the outlet of a narrow combe stretching down from the uplands above. Behind the hill, which hid it from the sea, and concealed from inland by an elm-bordered orchard, was a small two-storeyed house, cob-walled, and so ivy-covered as to be almost lost against the green of its back-ground. Searle, deep in thought as to what could be the object of the obvious charlatanism displayed by Delancy, was roused by the latter, who, turning suddenly, drew his attention to the cottage.

‘Here is my little snugery,’ he said briskly, ‘built in bygone days expressly to evade the Revenue duties, and which appeals to me now by its picturesqueness. You can judge from its approach how thoroughly it was arranged for its purpose. Two tracks, you see, join in front of it; each leads to a separate creek upon either side of the headland formed by the hill, so that shelter for landing

the goods was obtainable in any weather ; besides full facility for playing hide-and-seek with over-curious excisemen.'

'If we ever had a tariff again,' remarked Searle, 'it might be useful even now.'

'That would be delightfully romantic,' commented Cynthia. 'You could hide laces, and silks, and tea, and all kinds of things away, Mr. Delancy, and supply the Barton at wholesale prices. I shall certainly tell father to vote for this tariff one reads of. You must see inside, Mr. Searle—there are cunning cupboards, and secret lockers, trap-doors leading to mysterious recesses, and concealed exits.'

All of these were there, and Delancy made no difficulty about revealing them to his visitors ; from unexpectedly spacious cellars, to the cock-loft concealed among the thatch, he showed them that the building was honeycombed with hiding-places. In one, behind the old oak panelling of the entrance hall which was also the living-room, Searle picked up a small flat tin canister, which he handed to their guide.

'I get some of my colours in that shape,' Delancy remarked casually, as he put it in his pocket. 'Thanks for finding it.'

Searle had never seen artists' materials packed in such a form, but he made no comment, and presently Cynthia announced that it was time she was returning ; whereupon Delancy expressed regret that he could not accompany her to the Barton.

'But,' he added with a significant flourish, 'I hope to have the felicity of seeing you there this evening.'

The blush with which the girl received this floridly worded intimation made Searle resolve to take, without delay, the step which he had previously only contemplated. Therefore, when he reached the Barton along with her, he requested a private conversation with Mr. Trewen—a punctilious man whom he deemed it diplomatic to placate by acting in strictly correct fashion.

'I desire your permission, sir,' he began, 'to pay my addresses to your daughter—to Miss Cynthia.'

'Have you spoken to her ?' the other demanded.

'I thought it right to inform you first.'

'A very proper feeling,' commented Mr. Trewen, evidently gratified, 'which makes me regret that I cannot accede to your request, having already granted permission to my neighbour, Mr. Delancy, to address Cynthia. Unless, or until, she refuses him he must have a clear field.'

Against this ruling Searle argued in vain. Mr. Trewen was a formalist before everything, and very stubborn. Finally the wooer lost his temper, and damaged his case.

'The man cannot be what he seems!' he broke out hotly. 'His painting is a mere subterfuge—no sane person would say he was the artist he claims to be.'

'Let me tell you,' returned Mr. Trewen calmly, 'that your rash invective is positively libellous. I know more about Mr. Delancy than I do of you. That he is well connected I have already ascertained. As to his art I am no judge, but I can understand its practical outcome, and only yesterday I saw a cheque for two hundred guineas, for his last picture.'

'Was it genuine?' Searle interjected desperately.

'It was,' retorted the other, with warmth—'one of a series from the dealers who act as Mr. Delancy's agents; and as he happens to be investing part of the proceeds under my advice, I have previously passed similar documents through my own account. Now, sir,' he demanded sternly, 'will you apologise for your innuendoes against my friend?'

'I cannot,' returned Searle, 'without some explanation of the circumstances upon which I founded them.'

'Then,' said Mr. Trewen curtly, touching the bell, 'I shall have you shown to the door.'

The young man returned to the 'Pig and Pilchards' in an utterly crushed condition. He would not give up his wooing of Cynthia; yet to approach her directly after what had passed between her father and himself was useless, unless he could substantiate the suspicions to which he had foolishly given currency. Cogitation over the position brought him to the somewhat silly resolve to keep secret watch upon the cottage; in accordance with which idea he set out that night along the cliff path he had followed with Cynthia. The moon had set when he reached the hill at the combe's foot, and as a haze from seawards thickened the blackness he paused uncertainly near its summit. As he did so a dog barked from the direction of the creek where the yacht lay; a terrier scampered up, snapping at his ankles, and a man's figure followed, outlined vaguely in the darkness. A lantern was uncovered with a click, and its light flashed on his face.

'Hullo!' exclaimed Delancy's voice, genially enough. 'Having a stroll? I have just come from the Barton, and am going out in the little single-hander I keep here to pick up some lines. Care to come?'

Searle was in no mood to put himself in the other's power by accepting such an invitation.

'Thanks,' he answered, 'I am no sailor. I only came out for a breather before bedtime, and was wondering, when your dog spotted me, whether I could strike the road beyond here, and so return to Polglin?'

'Easily,' replied Delancy promptly. 'Turn to the left where the path forks, farther on.'

Bidding him 'good-night,' Searle swung briskly forward by the turn thus mentioned, until one foot slipped into space. Some instinct of self-preservation caused him to clutch at a gorse-bush. even while his body dangled over the verge upon which the plant grew. Luckily his fingers gripped its stem, which proved a tough one, and by a desperate effort he raised himself with its assistance to level ground.

'Thank God!' he ejaculated pantingly. 'That was a close call! That villain must have learned of what I told Trewen, and have pretended friendship to send me wrong.'

He peered over where, he now understood, the path ended in a recent landslip, to see, far below, the glint of phosphorescence where the waves sobbed against a sheer cliff. Beside him lay a loose boulder, and an idea came to him as he noted it. Pushing it gently, he toppled it over so that it fell with a splash into the water beneath, rousing a score of hoarsely shrieking gulls as it went. At the same moment Searle cried out as though affrighted, and flung his cap after the stone; then waited events.

A lantern light stabbed the darkness below, and the watcher above saw Delancy grope along the slippery rock edges, until the floating cap caught his attention. Fishing it out, he examined it closely, and, with an ejaculation of satisfaction which reached Searle's ears, flung it back into the water. Then he disappeared, going towards the yacht, where he hoisted sail and put to sea. When Searle was certain he had gone, he crept cautiously to the empty cottage, and, entering at an unlatched window, ensconced himself in the hiding-place he had been shown behind the panelling near the entrance, determined to probe the mystery, whatever the risks.

He discovered a knot-hole from which a view might be commanded, but grey dawn was trickling through the lozenge glass of the hall windows ere anything occurred to relieve his vigil. Then Delancy entered, accompanied by a coastguard, bearded and burly, bearing two baskets full of fish.

'Now, Perkins,' said the artist heartily, 'you'll need a

strengtheners after carrying these up for me. I am glad you passed as I was landing them; there have been times when the occupants of this house did not care to encounter a preventive officer on the beach at dawn, but those days are gone. You'd better have some fish with you too—I cannot possibly use them all.

'Thank'ee kindly, sir,' returned the man. 'I'll not say "no" to that; but I'll bring the rest up first.'

'Don't trouble,' responded Delancy, as he handed him a glass of whisky, 'I can manage what is left myself.'

He procured another basket, which he filled from the others, and gave it to the sailor, whom he then accompanied off the premises. When he returned he went straight to the canvas at which he had been working the day before, which stood propped in a corner, and drawing a close wooden case, evidently made to fit it, from another recess, he placed the picture face down in the latter, along with its stretcher.

'It is as well to pack while things are quiet,' he muttered as he did so, 'for people will likely come poking round early about that idiot who went over the cliffs last night. Silly fool! He would have spoiled my game with the girl—not to speak of this little business—if I had not played a strong hand.'

He had taken the remainder of the fish from the baskets, and Searle saw that each was filled beneath with the same flat tins as the one he had discovered. Delancy packed them into the case, above the back of the canvas, but had not sufficient to fill the space; and, taking up the baskets, he left the cottage, evidently on his way to the yacht for more. As the sound of his footsteps died down, Searle emerged, snatched a tin from the case, and ran to the door. Beyond the orchard the combe stretched upwards in bare grass land, so that escape in that direction was impossible without risk of detection; nor could he tell by which of the alternative paths round the hill his enemy might return. But, as he had to take the chance, he chose the one leading most directly into the cliff path to Polglin, and, as he traversed it cautiously, he had the satisfaction of hearing Delancy, as he ascended the other, calling his dog, previously left on the yacht, to come to heel.

Thereafter Searle duly reached the 'Pig and Pilchards,' where, after examining the tin he had abstracted, he breakfasted, with much satisfaction, mainly upon cream and pasties. Then he walked across to Penbarthy Barton, where he found a conveyance, bearing a picture-case, standing at the door, and Delancy engaged with Mr. Trewen in the latter's study. Searle insisted upon walking

in upon them unannounced, and the artist's face went white as he appeared, although he kept his wits.

'Well!' he exclaimed, with characteristic presence of mind, 'where have you been? Half the country is out looking for your dead body!'

'You might have told them,' retorted the new-comer grimly, 'where you imagined it to be.'

He placed his back to the door, and, spite of interruptions from Delancy, told his story.

'My theory is,' he concluded, 'that our friend here can no more paint than fly, and that he called himself an impressionist simply because it was a form of art which accounted for the eccentricity of his work to those who did not understand such things, besides enabling him to do it outside at points where he could watch the offing. That was what he was doing yesterday when Miss Cynthia and myself interrupted him; but I expect he had previously seen some signal which told him that a vessel had dropped overboard, at a prearranged spot, probably marked by a fisherman's buoy, the stuff he landed so cleverly.'

'But that is absurd,' cried Mr. Trewen, 'if only because there is, nowadays, nothing worth smuggling.'

'On the contrary,' retorted Searle. 'I happened to be engaged lately upon some "devilling" in a Customs case—so I was able to recognise this stuff when I broke open the air-tight tin at the "Pig and Pilchards."'

He held out the flat canister, showing it full of white crystals; and Mr. Trewen shrank back.

'Take care!' he ejaculated. 'It might explode.'

'Hardly,' returned the other coolly. 'It is saccharin, the duty upon which is at least 20s. per lb., while its value, apart from that, is about the same. Each of Mr. Delancy's picture-cases will carry about one hundred 1-lb. tins, so that the two hundred guinea cheques from his agents—who are assuredly not art dealers—will be about right.'

Delancy, who had edged towards a window opening upon the verandah, made a sudden rush for the exit; only, however, to run into the arms of the bearded coastguard.

'As I met Perkins on my way up,' explained Searle, 'I ventured to say to him that there might be some business here in his line. I fancy he has the Polglin constable handy also.'

That functionary stepped solemnly from behind a laurel, and as the couple carried off their captive Mr. Trewen turned to Searle.

'I apologise,' he said, in his stilted fashion. 'You are now quite at liberty to ascertain what impression, if any, you have made upon my daughter.'

It was some little time before the suitor put the momentous question thus permitted. Cynthia's face was a study in colour as she answered it.

'I believe—George,' she said shyly, 'that you are the real impressionist.'

A. WALLIE.

At the Sign of the Ship.

IT is a queer little discussion about the state of British fiction that we read in the *Pall Mall Magazine*. Mr. Street had written that the art was in a poor way, and other practitioners were asked for their diagnoses. 'John Oliver Hobbes' offered a brief history of fiction, beginning where Dunlop left off—beginning with Fielding, at all events—and assuring us that Mr. Hardy's 'finest novels may be compared with the tragedies of Sophocles.' In no respect visible to me does *Two on a Tower* or *Tess* resemble any extant tragedy of Sophocles, so I shall not go on to draw comparisons. A good modern novel is an excellent thing, so is a good Greek tragedy, but two things can hardly be more dissimilar. The critic adds that women can live on sentiment, 'but men cannot.' How can she tell? Sir Walter Scott lived on sentiment, if ever man or woman did; Tennyson's is a case in point, so is Thackeray's. We find them out, by touches here and there in their works, or in Scott's *Journal*. I cannot at present remember any lady who conspicuously existed on this airy food of sentiment, but I suspect Miss Austen when I read *Persuasion*. 'The greatest love-stories have been written in the greatest way by men,' says J. O. Hobbes, with truth; we may add, 'by sentimental men,' like Dante. 'We cannot be too sentimental,' a bride once observed to me at a dinner-party. Perhaps we are not sentimental enough to write good love-stories, but luckily there are plenty of other topics of romance.

* * *

Mr. Wells confined himself to proving that social and economic conditions will not endure a very long novel, like *Bleak House*. This is a mercy; all the novels that ran for two years in monthly parts were far too long. Excellent as many of them were, they got out of hand and were full of padding. We know that Dickens put in things he never dreamed of when he began

his tale—such things as Mrs. Gamp and the American part of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. These were lucky finds by the wayside, but other finds were not so fortunate, while they were equally unessential.

* * *

Mr. Gosse said that art was not to be always 'concerned with the normal.' I should think not, indeed! Homer and Shakespeare dealt freely in the supernormal. It is the abnormal, however, that Mr. Gosse likes, the facts which 'challenge all the musty formulas of conduct.' What are these? Are they the Ten Commandments? But facts in novels are always challenging these musty formulas. It needs a genius like Miss Austen's to write an interesting novel in which the Decalogue is not frequently broken. To be sure, such fractures can hardly be called abnormal. Vice is just as musty as virtue, just as stereotyped. Dozens of novelists tackle the higher abnormalities, from the author of *L'Homme qui rit* to the creator of the thoroughly abnormal Sir Richard Calmady and his young woman. My own taste does not ask for anything more abnormal than barratry in the way of misconduct. There is nothing abnormal in Homer, except perhaps the story of Phoenix. Homer did not take up the highly abnormal case of Pasiphae. If our novels are not supremely excellent, experiments in the abnormal will not improve them. The experiment is often tried, but the normal Fielding keeps his uninvaded throne; he has never been beaten.

* * *

Indeed, Mr. Courtney finds that 'a study of obscure or pathological cases' does already too much abound in modern fiction. He seems to think that we have too much, as Mr. Gosse holds that we have too little, of the abnormal. I don't want any of it, for one: the normal is a very wide field, especially *plus* the supernormal, which nobody at present can use with much success. Mr. Courtney ungallantly holds that novels are too much in the fair hands of women, though he presents with applause a galaxy of eminent female names. But which of them has the humour of Miss Austen—Miss Rhoda Broughton's is not of precisely the same kind—and where is there a rival of 'the great enchantress,' Mrs. Radcliffe? For humour the authors of *The Irish R.M.* seem to me to be unapproached (I answer my first question), but I fail to find a lady rival of Anne Radcliffe. The truth remains, as Mr. Street pointed out, that 'the simple yarn is eternal,' and

we have several masters of the yarn. That ought to suffice us ; though we have but the small change of a Dumas, the coins are sterling. Could you read a tale of any of our abnormal prodigies twice in a month, once in French, once in English, as I have read *Les Quarante-Cinq* of Dumas ? Experiments, normal or abnormal, come and go ; romance is permanent. It satisfies a normal and eternal human taste, a taste that survives through all the changing likes and dislikes of critics. I am tempted to praise a new romance by an author whom our little company of critics do not name. But 'good wine needs no bush.'

* . *

A 'yarn,' I must admit, may have all the correct elements of romance, and may powerfully excite curiosity, without being a good story. What I call 'elements of romance' Mr. Gosse, I think, calls *clichés*. It is in human nature to like *clichés* : the Middle Ages lived on such *clichés* as dwarfs, giants, dragons, knights, and fights. Fights are *clichés* in Homer ; but I love them, for all that. Duels, quarrels over cards, abductions, wigs on the green, swords in the sun, true love, black-hearted villains, treasures, sieges, desperate rides, are all *clichés* ; but mankind loves them when properly narrated.

* . *

But, though the meat be excellent, the cook may be execrable, as in *Restalrig : or, The Forfeiture* (1829). Can anyone tell me who wrote *Restalrig*, a sequel to *St. Johnstown : or, John, Earl of Gowrie* ? *St. Johnstown* (says the author) was a success. G. P. R. James wrote a Gowrie novel, on the mystery of the slaying of the Ruthvens (1600), but these two novels are not by James. The author of *Restalrig* throws off well ; he has good commodities. George Sprot, the forging notary of Eyemouth, meets, in the ruined abbey of Coldingham, in the dark, and in 1608, a mysterious being who induces him to do his forgeries and so secure the forfeiture of the Logans. George, as a matter of historical fact, was merely practising blackmail ; but the voice of the tempter in the yarn was one (said Mr. Sprot) 'that I could swear I have heard before, did the grave not cover him who owned it' ; the voice 'of a person who, to my knowledge, hath been two years numbered with the dead.' Excellent ! Now the wicked Logan of *Restalrig*, abnormal enough for Mr. Gosse, had, in fact, been dead for two years, years occupied by George Sprot

in forging treasonable letters, and the same with intent to blackmail Logan's heirs. Does our author, we ask eagerly, mean that Logan was *not* dead, and was tempting Sprot to ruin his son and heir out of mere 'cussedness'? If so, it was very like Logan; but poor Sprot is tortured (which he bore very peevishly) and hanged, and I cannot find out who the tempter really was, or why he tempted Sprot. The yarn, in fact, though rich in elements of romance, or *clichés*, is so terribly dull that it baffles my legitimate curiosity. We have a hidden treasure, that which the inventor of logarithms hunted for at Fastcastle; we have a dwarf, we have Anne of Denmark, Lady Beatrix Ruthven, and one who says '*Ventre Saint Gris*,' and is Mr. Stanley Weyman's old favourite, the useful Henri IV. But who the tempter was that had been dead for two years I cannot discover. Probably no other living mortal has read *Restalrig*, has burst into that silent sea, or *St. Johnstown* (which I seek for in vain), and so the author has certainly succeeded in one good point in the conduct of a tale—the excitement of curiosity. For the rest, his romance is stark naught.

* . *

I recant! By unexampled perseverance I have discovered who the tempter was. He was no other than the dwarf himself, who was a money-lender—he lent money to gamblers—and he had a scheme of vengeance to prosecute, and, moreover, was paid for his trouble by the Earl of Dunbar. The dwarf's name was Humphrey, and 'he expired amongst undescribable torments, of body and spirit,' in consequence of getting wet at sea. As we now know all about him, I cannot recommend any capitalist to republish *Restalrig*, though the dwarf, Humphrey Algerton, is as abnormal a bird as Mr. Gosse could desire, and though his conduct on every page flies in the face of all 'musty formulas of conduct.' The inference is that neither abnormalities, nor *clichés*, nor any other thing that you can name, make a good novel. The material, the raw material, is neither here nor there; the skill of the cook, of the artist, is the thing essential.

* . *

Perhaps I overstate the case, for no material of fiction is, properly speaking, 'raw.' All the material, all the stuff or stock, of the newest *purée* at Mr. Mudie's is as old as the hills, older than the more recent geological formations. There is probably no more

permanently popular novel than *East Lynne*, by Mrs. Henry Wood. Dean Stanley read it in the desert while travelling with his present gracious Majesty, then Prince of Wales; the royal eye may have scanned these exciting pages, and in 1903 I saw the drama of *East Lynne* acted on the dusty boards of the Town Hall, St. Andrews. About 1859 the novel was new; it still elicits the tears of sensibility. But the stuff of it, the plot? What about the repudiated wife, the mother, who returns, unbeknown, as governess in the family where she had been the missus? You find her (I consult Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek Mythology and Biography*) as Nephele, wife of Athamas: see Apollodorus and Hyginus. Probably Mrs. Henry Wood did not consult these ancient authors, perhaps she did not take the story out of the learned Lemprière, but she somehow used the same old materials, far older than Homer. Thence she fashioned a novel infinitely more popular and permanent than our masterpieces of 'artistry,' that beloved word.

* * *

This is always the case with popular work. I purchase *The Sphere* (October 1) and, in a field beside a pretty burn, as I wait for my train at St. Boswell's, under Eildon Hill, I read Mr. Shorter on 'the novel of the week.' He reviews *John Chilcote, M.P.* An earlier work of the author, he says, 'was very cleverly advertised' in America, 'and was one of the successes of the season.' 'Sweet are the uses of advertisement'! I never read of that success, but *John Chilcote, M.P.*, I learn, is about two men exactly like each other; 'you could not tell t'other from which.' One of them is married, the other meets that man's wife, and the delicate matrimonial situation which may thus be evolved is conspicuous to the meanest intelligence. One need, therefore, say no more on that point, and as 'the Beck case gives the story a curious topicality,' no doubt the story will be popular. One turns to Mr. Nathaniel Gould's romance, *The Doctor's Double*. The material, the stuff, is the very same. A twin marries the betrothed of his twin, the Doctor. The situation is full of quandaries, as delicate as you please. But it is not new, it is a *cliché*. The best-known original is the old French romance of *Amis et Amiles*, who were so exactly alike ('a miss is as good as a mile' says the proverb based on the facts) that Mrs. Amis supposes Mr. Amiles to be Mr. Amis. Mr. Amiles, like the 'Doctor's Double,' behaves as a gentleman ought to behave. Probably neither Mr. Gould

nor the author of *John Chilcote, M.P.*, has read *Amis et Amiles*; both may deem themselves original. But both use, in their fashion, the same prehistoric invention, and their success, 'clever advertising' apart, depends on the skill with which they handle the world-old topic. 'All the stories have been told,' 'tis very true, but all bear re-telling, while the nature of man is the same, if the artist is master of the material and of his craft. All conceivable material is a *cliché*: nothing is fresh but the genius of the narrator, and the unstaled appetite of the reader or listener. All of Shakespeare's plots, all of Molière's, are *clichés* that had long trailed about the world in *fabliaux* and popular tales.

* * *

Sir Archibald Geikie tells the story of a Scottish minister who prayed that 'we might be preserved from the horrors of war as depicted in the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News*.' In the latter periodical we have Japanese making 'a human pyramid' against a high wall, while a solitary Russian officer cuts off the apex of the pyramid with sabre and revolver. After killing about twenty-two men, he fell fainting from fatigue and was slain by a shell. Now, is this a likely story? Why was one lone captain left to repel the assailants? Would firing twenty shots from a revolver fatigue anybody? Would the Japanese shell the very point where their own men were most exposed? It is a very clever picture, but it surely represents a *cliché* of romance, not an actual event. One does not see, either, why the Japanese could not bring up a telescopic scaling-ladder instead of making 'a human pyramid.'

* * *

Why should uncritical versions of historical facts be told to little Presbyterians? Entering the parish kirk of Coldingham, where Sprot met the tempter in the dark, I found *Morning Rays*, 'the Church of Scotland's Sabbath Scholar's Treasury.'¹ Herein Mr. George Stronach, M.A., tells the story of 'The Covenanters,' and as to John Brown, the famous Christian carrier, he does not tell it right. J. B. was found by the 'Master Monster'² cutting peats. 'Refusing to take the oaths and pray for the King,' he was pistolled by Claverhouse, who also 'swore at him,' at 'the poor old man,' in the presence of his wife and two children. This was in May 1685. Now, Wodrow, writing thirty years later, avers, on what authority he does not tell us, that Claverhouse himself

¹ R. & R. Clark, price one halfpenny.

² Claverhouse.

pistolled the man. He 'does not find' that any oath was offered to him. Nobody says, except Mr. Stronach, that he was 'a poor old man.' He was married, says Walker, who knew his widow, in 1682. That Claverhouse 'swore at him' I am not informed: Claverhouse was no swearer. Walker says, on the authority of Mrs. Brown, that six soldiers shot Brown, not that Claverhouse was obliged to do so himself. Neither Wodrow, nor Walker, nor Mr. Stronach says why Brown was shot. Claverhouse, on May 3, 1685, does say in a letter to Queensberry. Brown refused to abjure a declaration by the 'hillmen' to the effect that they would try in their own courts their enemies, including witnesses who answered summonses to appear as evidence against them, and would put them, if found guilty, to death. Not to abjure this war of assassination was a shooting matter, so declared by the Privy Council and the Judges. Brown also would not promise not to rise in arms, 'but said he knew no king.' 'Treasonable papers,' bullets, and match were found in his house. Other discoveries of arms and of treasonable facts were found after his death. Claverhouse had no choice but to shoot him, though, if he shot him before the eyes of his wife, I can suggest no excuse for the action.

* * *

Mr. Stronach repeats the same tale, with variations (Highlanders do the shooting when Crichton's dragoons refuse), about another man, David Steel. 'His young wife' behaved exactly like Brown's wife. The story is a mere variant of the Brown *cliché*. Steel's relations, in the course of time, transferred the tale to him: his mother was an acquaintance of Mrs. Brown. Their family names are inextricably confused. The evidence for the Steel variant is 'a MS. derived from oral accounts of some of the descendants' of a cousin of David Steel, and, I believe, is as dateless as 'the descendants' are; it was first published in 1831 by Mr. Gavin, editor of *The Scots Worthies*. The late descendants of Steel borrowed from Walker, writing about 1720, his tale of Brown shot in 1685—a story told to Walker, we know not when, by Brown's widow. Crichton himself tells us how and why Steel was put to death; the story is utterly unlike the myth.

* * *

Meanwhile the ministers of the Church of Scotland utterly repudiated Renwick, whose declaration of war Brown refused to abjure. They had no sympathy with murder, and bade their

flocks shun the unhappy young enthusiast. The Church of Scotland is no descendant of Mr. Stronach's other hero, Cameron, who prophesied a Protestant crusade. 'Blood should be their sign, and No Quarter their word, and he earnestly wished that it might begin in Scotland.' Probably, or certainly, no ministers in Scotland would have ordained Cameron; the thing was done by fanatics who had long been safe in Holland. Neither in Renwick, Mr. Stronach's 'angel of the Covenant,' nor in Cameron has the Church of Scotland a representative. Young children of the Kirk will learn as they grow up the truth about these brave misguided enthusiasts, whose doings were most distasteful and noxious to the huge majority of the ministers. Their followers, after the Revolution of 1688, did not rejoin the Church of Scotland, which has no responsibility for them.

* * *

We smile when foreigners talk of 'Sir Harcourt,' meaning 'Sir William Harcourt,' but an Aberdonian critic privately informs me that I have made exactly the same sort of blunder. Writing elsewhere on 'The Origins of the Alphabet,' I have spoken of Don Estacio da Veiga as 'Don da Veiga,' and of Don Manuel de Gongora y Medinez as 'Don Gongora.' This error is equivalent to that of the Frenchman who writes 'Sir Harcourt.' Taking 'Don' to mean much the same as our 'Mr.' or the French 'Monsieur,' I made this blunder, into which, perhaps, other ignorant Britons may fall: these words are written for their edification.

ANDREW LANG.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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